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# AMERICAN ROAD

VOLUME XIII NUMBER 2



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# AMERICAN ROAD

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*American Road's Silent Movie Route*

Stone-faced Buster Keaton was born in Piqua, Kansas. Heroic Harold Lloyd hailed from Burchard, Nebraska. And artistic Walt Disney first drew his cartoons in Kansas City, Missouri. Once upon a yesteryear, the people who shaped Hollywood took a route through the Midwest. • THOMAS ARTHUR REPP

### 66 Silent Star Cars

*Five Stars. Five Cars. Five Classic Hollywood Rides.*

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*Races, Chases, Bumpers, and Bananas on the Early Screen*

Need to move a parked car with a banana? You'll learn how to accomplish that slippery trick, win love by racing across country, and seek out parking spaces with a chicken as we showcase twelve vintage motor movies. • THOMAS ARTHUR REPP

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*"Miss Gish from Massillon"*

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Pull up your car, slip on your slapshoes, and take a walk around the lobby of the Montecito Inn—and you'll be following in the secret footsteps of silent screen genius Charlie Chaplin. • JILLIAN GURNEY

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*"Party Hardy"*

Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten yourself into! Welcome to Harlem, Georgia, home of the Laurel and Hardy Museum, and the bigger half of filmdom's finest fat-and-skinny team, Oliver Hardy. • THOMAS ARTHUR REPP

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## Editor's Rambler

"Silents, Please!"

The hills were alive with the sound of music. And I wanted them to shut up so I could sleep. I was parked in a campsite on the West Coast, forty-five minutes from Hollywood, when the impromptu concert began. I'd spent the day admiring the cinematic scenery—sand and surf so sleek, they should have had an agent—driving a seaside road that unwound like a shiny celluloid strip. But I hadn't anticipated that anyone in the camp would assault the night with an audition. I'd just closed my eyes, ready for caviar dreams, when someone who sounded like Bob Dylan sucking a popsicle stick shattered the peace, singing and strumming a clumsy guitar.

*Shmiiile, doh yer art is aching....*

Instinctively, I sat upright in my sleeping bag and reached for a map: I wasn't *that* close to the ocean; I couldn't be hearing a sea cow. A call to the camp manager went unanswered; apparently, the midnight snorkeler had already claimed his first casualty. Slowly, I realized that I was hearing an aspiring entertainer—the kind of wannabe who goes to Hollywood because his neighbors tell him to go somewhere. I crawled under my pillow. And there I stayed, praying for the sun to rise and burn off my ears.

*Shmiiile, even doh is baking....*

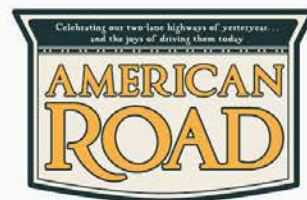
The next morning, I drove off into the wild blue yonder, surprised to find that the yonder wasn't cracked. I rejoined the highway, but in my head I continued to hear Hootenanny. The landscape played across my windshield—bigger and more beautiful than it will ever appear on any screen—but I couldn't concentrate on the panorama. I began to consider how often life's stunning scenes are soured by a bad soundtrack. Modern technology has made communication a running gag—bells and whistles give our lives the oomph of an MGM musical. But I often think we'd be better served remembering the silent movie masters—Murnau, Chaplin, Keaton, and Griffith, among them—who showed the world how to view *Sunrise* (1927) and *City Lights* (1931), *Go West* (1925) or *Way Down East* (1920), and focus on the big picture.

In this issue of *American Road*, we peer through that majestic, classic lens. Our features showcase locations connected to the silent cinema, beginning with "Flicker Highway: *American Road's* Silent Movie Route." Our 370-mile path through Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri unearths the Midwest's movie roots—from Harold Lloyd's Birthplace to the hometown of Louise Brooks, the Buster Keaton Museum, and the first house ever frequented by Mickey Mouse. It's ambitious, enormous, and assuredly the first attempt ever made to frame this region with regard to its filmic past. We're honored to present the premiere.

Hollywood stars loved their cars, and that fact begs the question: If Clara Bow owned a gorgeous Rolls-Royce Phantom—and Cecil B. DeMille bought a classy Cadillac Town Cabriolet—why did Mary Pickford drive a modest Ford Model A? We reveal the answer in "Silent Star Cars." Pickford also plays a part in "*American Road's* Silent Era Films," a reel retrospective that trains a spotlight on early automobile films such as Wallace Reid's speedy romance, *The Roaring Road* (1919); and Mabel Normand's triumphant turn in *Mabel at the Wheel* (1914). Our road departments continue the trend as we follow Will Rogers along Route 66, Lillian Gish on the Lincoln Highway, and Charlie Chaplin across US 101. We wrap up production with an installment of "The Extra Mile" that visits the Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem, Georgia, before cueing our final fade-out.

In 1929, Charlie Chaplin told *Motion Picture* magazine, "Talkies...are ruining the great beauty of silence. They are defeating the meaning of the screen...." I doubt that he ever heard Hootenanny on the Pacific Highway, but noise is noise. Find yourself a few quiet frames this summer, a place where you can appreciate the silent things in life. At the end of the day, all you really need to hear is the sound of a smile.

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AMERICAN ROAD® (ISSN 1542-4316) is published quarterly by Mock Turtle Press, LLC. Included in EBSCO Publishing's products. Copyright © 2015 by Mock Turtle Press. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Printed on recycled paper.

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AMERICAN ROAD® app available through iTunes.  
Subscriptions: \$16.95 per year; US: \$29.95; Canada: \$42.95; foreign.  
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♥ **ON OUR WINDSHIELD:** The famous Mack Sennett Bathing Beauties take a ride on the skimpy side, circa 1919. Photo courtesy the Library of Congress. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** An empty chair forever awaits the return of one of the world's greatest clowns at the Harold Lloyd Birthplace of Burchard, Nebraska. Photo by AMERICAN ROAD.







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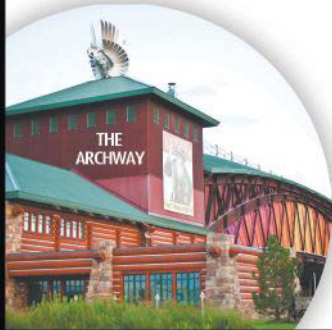
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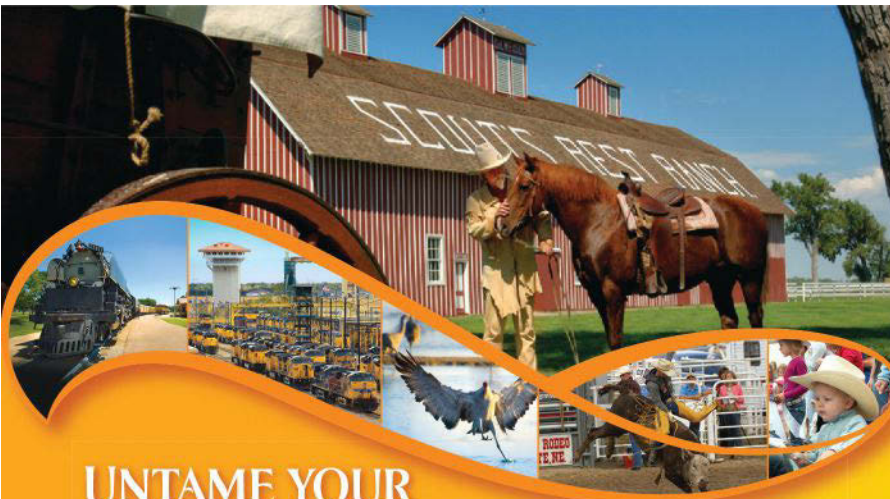
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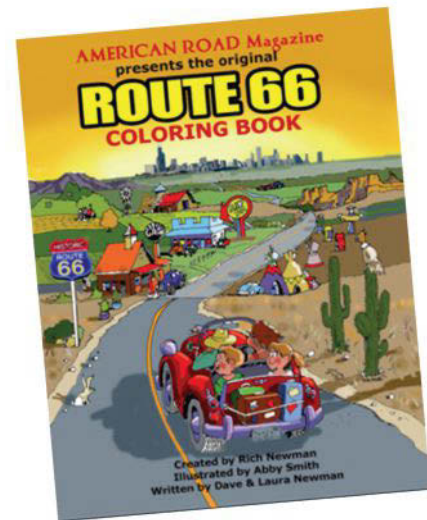
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## ZADOCK PRATT ROCKS ON

I just received a print out of an article in *American Road* magazine from a friend here in Prattville, New York, and it contained a delightful, one-column article about our town founder, Zadock Pratt.

I was curious about seeing this in a magazine that was new to me, and am writing today to ask A) how is it that someone in your employ came to hear about Pratt and his miscellaneous adventures in the first place, and B) who is the author of your article and where did they find their source material about Pratt?

There are a couple of us here in Prattville who have been passing around your magazine, and we've been wondering how you guys managed to send a copy of this issue to Prattville c/o the Village Town Hall? Good choice (and please elucidate, if possible)! Since that copy is with someone else as I write, I'm not sure which issue it was that contained the Zadock Pratt piece. Does Autumn 2014 sound right to you?

We've got a lot more interesting material about Zadock Pratt and why Prattville is an interesting place to visit, if you'd like to learn more.

Thanks for your article, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Suzanne Walsh, Curator,  
Zadock Pratt Museum  
Prattville, New York

*Greetings, Suzanne, and thank you for your letter. Prattville founder Zadock Pratt certainly is a compelling historical figure. Here at American Road, we're fascinated by this man who left the world "New York's Mount Rushmore" in the form of his ornately carved, would-be rock tomb.*

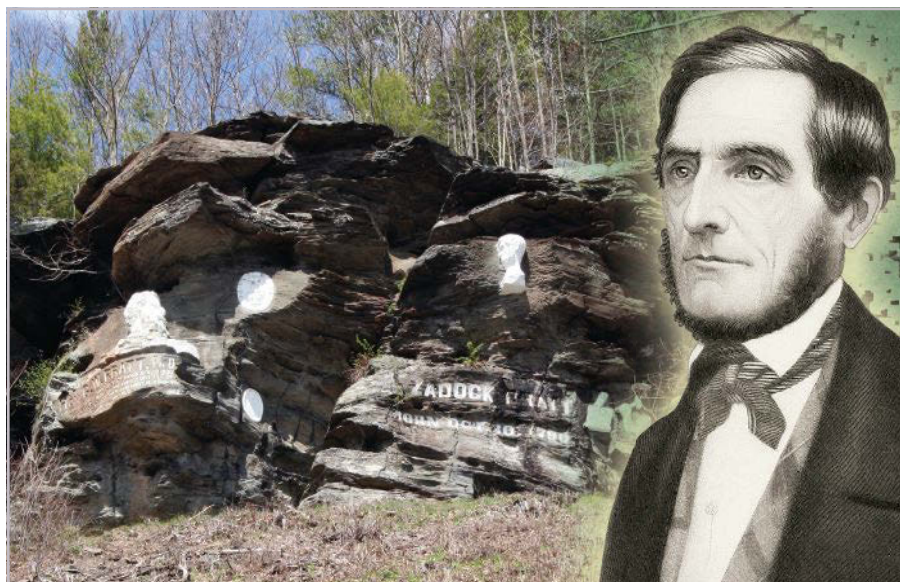
*We believe the article to which you refer was "The Addenda of Zadock Pratt"—a segment that appeared in the Autumn 2014 installment of our regular department Tunnel Vision: News Around the Road. That segment was written by our Executive Editor, Thomas Arthur Repp. He informs us that he has been intrigued with the area in and around Prattville since he researched and wrote "A Winkle in Time"—a feature about the Rip van Winkle auto trail—in 2006. That story was reprinted in our celebratory tenth-anniversary issue in the summer of 2012.*

*Mr. Repp indicates "The Addenda of Zadock Pratt" was sourced from a number of period newspaper articles; specifically, the tale of Pratt's ax attack on a ballroom stairway is recorded in The Anglo-American Times of February 12, 1870, and the account of the "Dried Apples" coffin was reported in the Logansport Journal of February 19, 1859.*

*Finally, in answer to your last question, the decision to send a complimentary copy of the issue to the Village Town Hall was made by our fact checker, Gail Chesterfield, at the time she was conducting phone calls to verify information, and passed along to our Circulation Manager, Tracy Wawrzyniak. We're glad it reached you!*



**GRAVE SIGHT:** Prattville, New York, founder Zadock Pratt intended Pratt Rock to serve as his tomb.



## PAPER MOON TRAIL

I received the issue containing your Tatum O'Neal *Paper Moon* interview this afternoon. What an article! The picture of Tatum is beautiful! If she came back to McCracken, we could give her a key to the city!

Shirley Higgins  
McCracken, Kansas

What a fabulous article! You printed so many great pictures [in "Paper Moon: The Making of a Classic Under the Midwest's Canvas Sky"]! Thank you for featuring McCracken in your magazine! Come back and visit us soon!

Lynnette Doornbos  
McCracken, Kansas





## THUMBS UP FOR THE FINGER LAKES

**M**y congratulations on an outstanding Spring 2015 issue! There was so much great information in Volume 13, Number 1, that it will take years of road trips to utilize.

For starters, the twenty-two-page "Trail of the Ancients" article covered a number of locations we have yet to visit, such as Canyon de Chelly and Moki Dugway, that will factor into future journeys.

The Sandy Hook lighthouse on page 67 brings back fond memories of many business trips to "The Hook" when I was a project manager for National Park Service jobs at that park unit of Gateway National Recreation Area from 1980 to 1995.

The Sturgis Pretzel story on page 71 reminded me of the wide variety of pretzel brands available when I was growing up

in another corner of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, about twenty miles from Lititz. My German roots in that county go back at least as far as 1743 on my family tree.

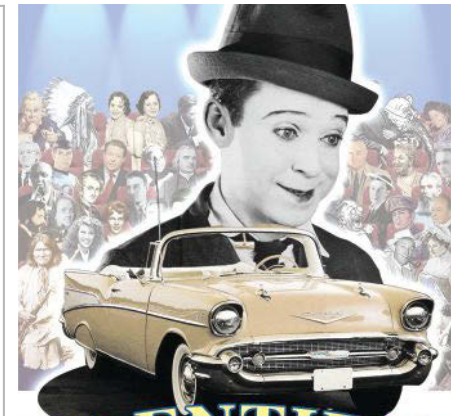
And finally, the "New York's Finger Lakes" write-up was enjoyable. My wife still has one pair of socks left that was made at the Seneca Knitting Mills, from my business trips to that town. That shows how long American-made products can last.

One item I do take issue with appears on page 88. When Editor [Robert] Klara writes "...the state parks department has preserved some of the original structure at 136 Fall Street....", I need to throw in my two cents. The remains of the Wesleyan Chapel and adjacent property were purchased by the National Park Service in 1985. Because I was project manager for that park, I was right in the middle of the fund transfer from NPS to the National Endowment for the Arts, so the NEA could run a nationwide design competition to decide how to best handle the chapel and surroundings.

The winner of that competition partnered with a design firm under contract to NPS, and produced design and construction documents. This multi-year planning-design-construction project was managed by NPS. The end result ultimately was managed by Park Superintendent Judy Hart, who began early planning for the park out of the regional office in Boston years before.

The finished project not only protects and interprets the remains of the Wesleyan Chapel, but also includes a wonderful visitor center at 136 Fall Street, with Declaration Park ("Declaration of Sentiments," a bluestone waterwall, and outdoor seating) in between. My personal treat for all those years of work was to be staff photographer for the ribbon-cutting weekend, which included speeches by National Park Service Director [Roger] Kennedy, New York Senator [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan, and author Garrison Keillor, among others. California Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (now retired) and staff also attended the grand opening as supporters of women's rights, and Women's Rights National Historical Park.

Bill Witmer  
National Park Service  
Lakewood, Colorado ♥



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### LAST ROUND'S ANSWER!

Honolulu-born explorer and lecturer Hiram Bingham III traveled to Peru in 1911 and discovered the largely forgotten Inca city of Machu Picchu. **CONGRATULATIONS TO WINNER LISA CHESNUT OF MUSTANG, OKLAHOMA!**





**(1) YOU GOTTA HAVE ART:** Curtis Osmun, former Systems Librarian at the Art Institute of Chicago, has been named *American Road* Communications Director. He is already overseeing rollout of the magazine's new interactive website at [americanroadmagazine.com](http://americanroadmagazine.com).



**(2) WAIT FOR THE SEQUEL:** A fire struck Virginia's Mayberry Drive-In & Diner on April 2, 2015, destroying much of the unique eatery's interior. Owner Bob Craig tells *American Road* he intends to keep the movie screen in operation while he rebuilds the restaurant.



**(3) HEARYE, HERE YE!** Located at 3435 State Route 30 East in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, the colonial landmark that is the Johnston House will celebrate its bicentennial this June. The Lincoln Highway Experience museum has been housed inside since 2012.

## ART INSTITUTE'S OSMUN JOINS *AMERICAN ROAD*

**C**HICAGO—For the past nineteen years, Curtis Osmun has spent his days gazing on the painted landscapes of Claude Monet. As Systems Librarian at the Art Institute of Chicago, he was surrounded by works of genius created by the old masters. And now, he brings his skills and sensibilities to *American Road*.

Osmun joins the magazine full-time in the capacity of Communications Director. His credits include eleven years spent as a Serials Cataloger and Technical Support Specialist for Northwestern University Library, as well as stage endeavors at numerous Chicago theatre companies.

"Curtis will be involved with our creative and technical operations," says Executive Editor Thomas Repp. Osmun says he's happy to be with *American Road* and looks forward to the journey and the new horizons he will see. ♥

## UP IN SMOKE: MAYBERRY DRIVE-IN & DINER BURNS

**M**ONETA, Va.—Drama was always part of the plan at the Mayberry Drive-In & Diner: As a combination cafe and outdoor cinema, it served up its share of edge-of-your-seat scenes. But the debilitating fire that struck the establishment on April 2, 2015, was never part of the program. The Moneta Fire Department extinguished the flames, but not before the kitchen and storage areas were destroyed and the dining area damaged by smoke and heat.

"It was heartbreaking," owner Bob Craig told NBC affiliate WSL 10. He vowed that his restaurant would rise from the ashes. At the time of this writing, the movie screen is up and running. We'll keep readers informed as the story unfolds. ♥

## JOHNSTON HOUSE TELLS AN EPIC STORY IN STONE

**L**ATROBE, Pa.—If stone walls could talk, imagine the stories the interior of the Johnston House could tell! The building, fronted by the original Lincoln Highway, was built in 1815 by Alexander Johnston along with a forge and rolling mill. When business failed, he turned his mansion into an oasis where travelers could rest and eat. It afterward served as a tollhouse on the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia turnpike, and a rendezvous point for presidents William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor.

In recent years, the home has housed the Lincoln Highway Experience, a museum that tells the tale of American transportation. And this June, officials will celebrate the structure's bicentennial. Who knows what chapters will be added to its history during the next two centuries? We can't imagine, but we're all ears. ♥





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# MEMORY MOTEL

Oceana Beach Club Hotel  
Santa Monica, California

BY POP AMHEARST

**T**he parade of comedians who made their pilgrimage to the Oceana Apartments reads like a chuckling Who's Who: *Jerry Lewis. Marcel Marceau. Dick Van Dyke.* All aspired to give the world the giggles in the early 1960s. And all came to glean advice from the king of clowns who resided inside Room #203.

He was Stan Laurel—the skinny half of Laurel and Hardy, the screen's premier plump-and-runt comedy team.

Folks in the funny business still talk of how Laurel made himself accessible to up-and-coming comics during his final years. Some even return to the Oceana today in homage to a man who was so generous with his fame. All find that the area has changed. The rides stopped whirling at nearby Pacific Ocean Park in 1967, and Santa Monica Boulevard surrendered its official Route 66 designation decades ago. New resorts and beach houses have risen to challenge the sun.

But the sand and the surf look the same.

When Laurel moved here in 1958, he'd recently lost his on-screen partner of thirty years. Georgia-born Oliver Norvell Hardy had succumbed to cerebral thrombosis the previous August, and out of respect for his longtime foil, Laurel had vowed never again to perform for an audience. The death hit him hard; depression burdened his spirits, and he sought

some place new to exercise his nimble mind. "We finally decided on an apartment and will move in on June 15th," he wrote to a friend in early 1958. "The address is the Oceana Hotel at 849 Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica. It's an expensive joint, but we got a pretty good deal for a year's lease. The place is brand new and faces the ocean—about 3 blocks North of Wilshire."

Once moved in, Laurel spent his days answering fan mail and acting as a mentor to a younger generation of laugh-makers. He kept his phone number listed—*EXbrook 3-5656*—and warmly shared his wisdom with anyone who phoned. Often he invited young comics to drop by his home.

"I made regular little visits," Dick Van Dyke told NPR in 2011. "I would grill him about how he came up with this funny idea and that funny idea. I said to him...I've copied a good deal from you over the years." He said, "Yes, I know."

Laurel lived in Room #203 until the day he passed away in February of 1965. Years afterward, the Oceana was refashioned as a resort hotel. Room #203 was split in two during a 2007 remodeling, and in 2013, the Oceana Beach Club Hotel renovated its lobby and courtyard, adding modern sophistication and a new color palette of cool blues, greys, and whites. Two-star Michelin Chef Josiah Citrin opened the Tower 8 restaurant onsite.



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Of course, Santa Monica Beach still lies just across California State Route 1, and the blue horizon forever stretches west into eternity. After dark, the roll of the surf can sound like the wave of applause—an appropriate encore for this place where a screen legend made his last stand and worked so hard to leave the world laughing.

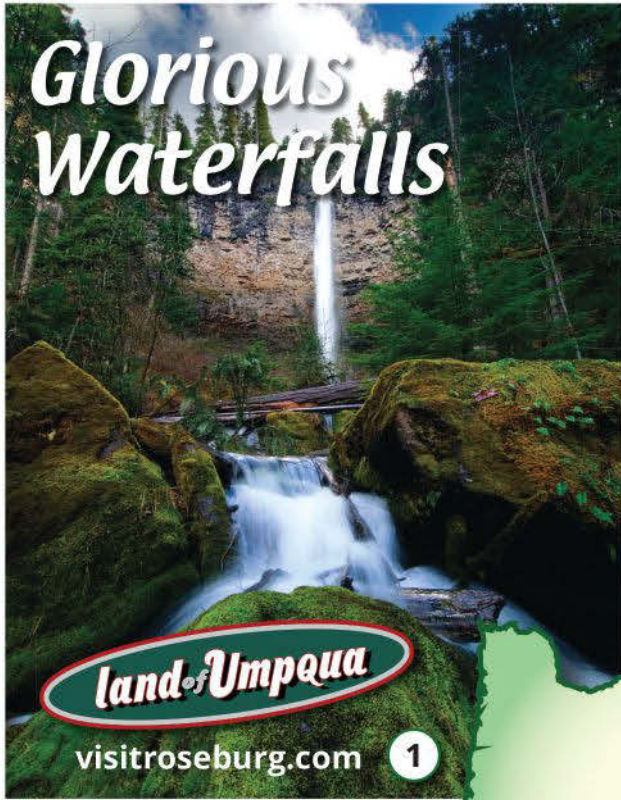
"I'd rather be skiing," Laurel reportedly said on his deathbed. "Oh," his nurse asked, "are you a skier, Mr. Laurel?" "No," he replied, "but I'd rather be skiing anyway." ♥

POP AMHEARST is a Roadside Contributor to AMERICAN ROAD. Photos courtesy Oceana Beach Club Hotel.

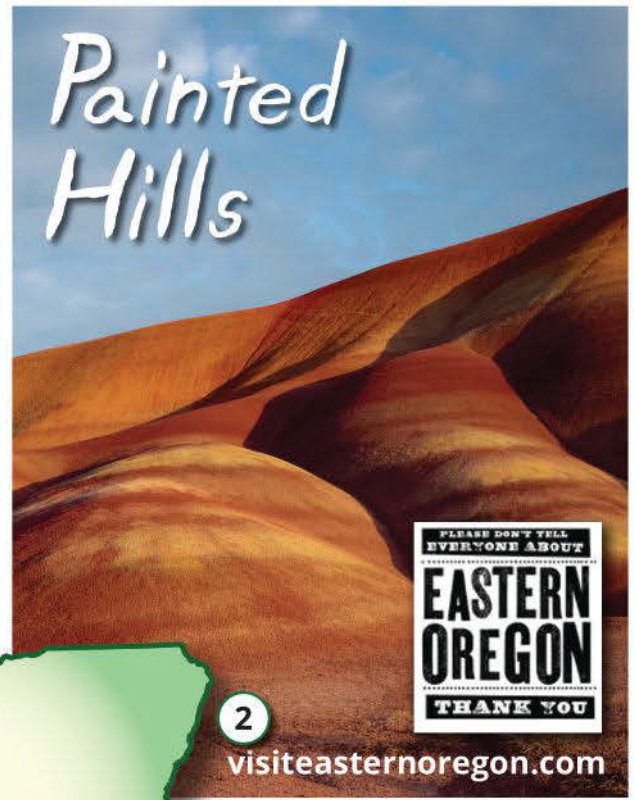


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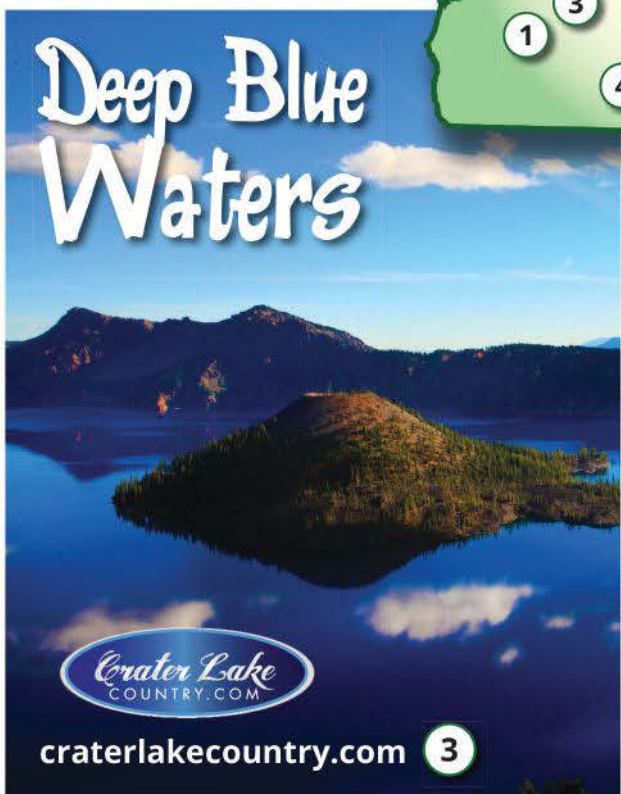
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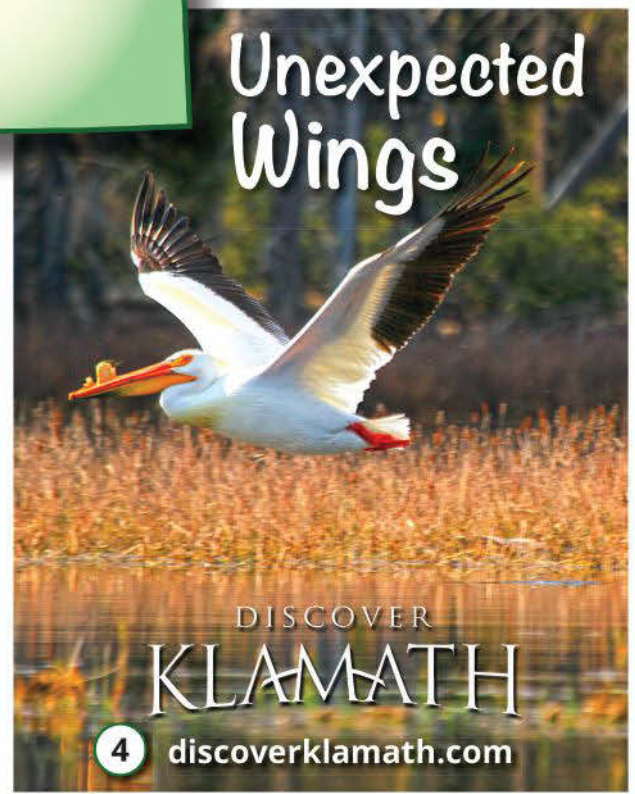
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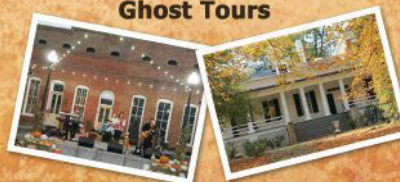
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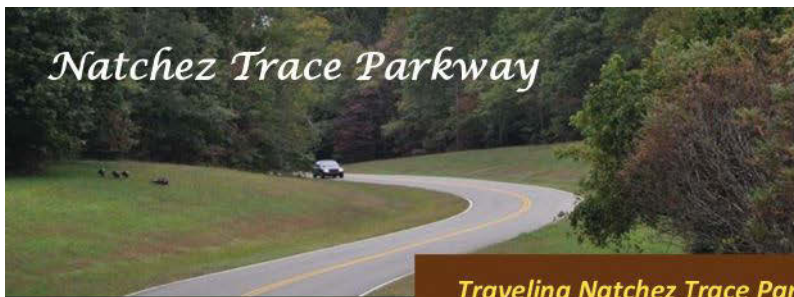
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Contributors: Michael Dwyer, Jillian Gurney, Bob "Turkeyfish" Lewis, Rebecca Repp, and Thomas Arthur Repp

## ARK of the Covenant

**B**RISTOL, Ind.—Few but the most die-hard film fans are aware that John Wayne appeared in the cinema's first version of *Noah's Ark*. The rough-and-tumble western hero-to-be played an extra in the 1928 flood sequences—braving the storm and proving that a deluge couldn't dampen his spirits.

Eighty-four years later, a young man named Alex Radelich found inspiration in the same boat. He was a student weathering exam week at Purdue University when he happened to catch a TV screening of the 2007 Genesis-inspired comedy *Evan Almighty*.



In the movie, a character asked, "How can we change the world?" and Morgan Freeman—playing the part of God—replied, "One act of random kindness at a time."

Radelich felt a drop of inspiration fall from the sky. Then and there, he decided to fill the country with a flood of good will.

Enlisting the assistance of friend Dalton Lemert and brothers Theodore and Jacob Thatcher, Radelich formed ARK Project Now—a nonprofit group that aspires to improve the world through one Act of Random Kindness at a time. Then he and his team hit the road in an RV to practice what they preached, taking foster children to Disney World in Florida, treating ailing kids to a shopping spree in Nebraska, helping a homeless woman turn her life around in Las Vegas.

The good will spread. Media noticed. The four young men began to look like bigger heroes than John Wayne.

And this year, members of ARK will return to the highway in a new nine-thousand-mile trip across America designed to continue encouraging altruism. They'll travel in a new donated motor home, be followed by a Chicago-based video production company that hopes to create a reality television show from their journey, and blog about the hope and heart they find at [arkprojectnow.com](http://arkprojectnow.com). Consider donating to the cause—if not money, then a smile, which can do more for a neighbor than an umbrella on a rainy day.

**HOPE, AHOY!** [Left to right] ARK's Teddy Thatcher, Alex Radelich, and Jacob Thatcher hoist Dalton Lemert.



## Colorado Making Tracks

**D**ENVER—Railroad buffs rejoice! From the Centennial State comes news sure to send your pulse chugging: The Colorado Department of Transportation has approved a new scenic road that traces the historic narrow gauge section of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

The "Tracks Across Borders Byway" connects Durango, Colorado, to Chama, New Mexico. It stretches 125 miles across the Southwest, traversing segments of US Highways 160 and 64, Colorado Highways 172 and 151, and Archuleta County Roads 500 and 551. Ghost towns and railroad grades define the drive as the route ushers motorists across quiet country long enlivened by the rumble of steel wheels and the wail of steam whistles.

Scenery provides much of the punch: As conceived, the Tracks Across Borders includes a spur to Chimney Rock National Monument; it crosses the Continental Divide, skirts the northern edge of Navajo Lake, and chases the Navajo River. It passes through the Southern Ute and Jicarilla Apache



Reservations—where museums showcasing those sovereign nations share their stories. All have their ties to those glorious old tracks.

"The railroad showcases Chaco, Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo cultures," reads a news release issued by CDOT.

And now, so does the road.

## US 52 Rock Show

**C**OAL GROVE, Ohio—Motorists wheeling around southern Ohio received a big surprise during the wee hours of April 10, when a boulder the size of a two-story house broke free from the rock face above US 52 and rolled onto the highway east of the Ashland-Coal Grove Bridges.

Two track hoes and three jackhammers worked for days to clear the road, patiently breaking the stupendous stone to bits. Dump trucks hauled the rubble away to an Ohio Department of Transportation garage. "The upside is that the rock will be used on projects for maintenance," ODOT District 9 officer Kathleen Fuller told the *Ironton Tribune*. "We won't need anything for a couple of years."





## Route 66 Park and Glow

**S T. ROBERT, Mo.**—After sunset, the skill of neon artists shines on Route 66. From Mitchell, Illinois—where a shining martini glass marks the Luna Cafe—to Tucumcari, New Mexico, with its beaming birdie swooping



outside the Blue Swallow Motel—the Mother Road nightly becomes a gleaming dream. But what happens when fate pulls the plug on one of those dazzling masterpieces?

Members of Pulaski County Route 66 Preservation and the Missouri Route 66 Association wrestled with the dark question—and reached an enlightening solution. Realizing that no one wants to see a vintage 66 marquee permanently dimmed, they decided to fashion an alfresco electric preservation ground where orphaned Route 66 neon signs can reclaim their former glory. They call this shining sanctuary Route 66 Neon Park.

Plans call for the haven's construction inside George M. Reed Roadside Park, located in a wide median area between the eastbound and westbound lanes of Route 66 at St. Robert, Missouri. Sponsorship for bricks, benches, and signs is presently being sought online at [route66preservation.org](http://route66preservation.org). The group hopes to showcase abandoned neon signs that stood along Route 66 between 1926 and 1985, including a beauty from the famously defunct John's Modern Cabins of Newburg, Missouri. Other gems will certainly join the collection and add to its warm, nostalgic glow.

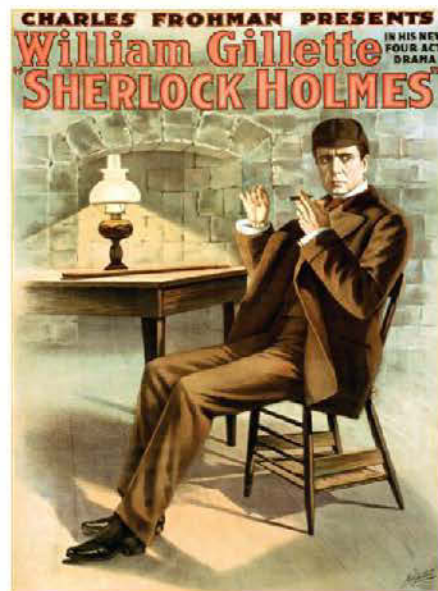
## There's No Place Like Holmes'

**EAST HADDAM, Conn.**—Every fan of detective films can hear the line in their minds—a pronouncement made when the case is cracked by the inimitable Sherlock Holmes: *Elementary...my dear Watson!*

That phrase—or a similar sentiment—was first given voice by stage actor William Hooker Gillette—a Connecticut thespian who was a man of mystery in his own right. And this year, the Constitution State is embracing that legacy: The nonprofit entity Connecticut Humanities is publishing *The Great Connecticut Caper*—an online serialized storybook that encourages kids to develop their own processes of deduction.

Gillette first portrayed the Baker Street sleuth in the aptly titled *Sherlock Holmes*—an 1899 four-act play he co-authored with Holmes creator Arthur Conan Doyle. In that production, he donned a suave dressing gown and smoked a bent briar pipe—suiting Sherlock with the trappings that define him to this day. At one point in the plot, he turned to his companion and exclaimed, “Oh, this is elementary, my dear fellow!” Audiences were entranced. A pop culture icon was born.

Gillette went on to depict the great detective in thirteen hundred stage performances and one feature film. Between acts, he built a secret lair of his own. Gillette Castle—as that abode is now known—survives as a twenty-four-room, medieval-style castle perched high above the Connecticut River. Its ornate insides are filled with hidden passages and portals. Unique puzzle locks adorn each of its forty-seven



interior doors. A set of mirrors allows prying eyes to spy on guests inside the great hall.

Gillette died in 1937, and the property now operates as a state park. Yet it retains its reputation as a house of riddles. Now it's become the setting of *The Great Connecticut Caper*, which asks the question, “What would happen if Gillette Castle disappeared?”

Connecticut Humanities has secured twelve writers to answer that question—and twelve artists to illustrate it—in installments that appear at [cthumanities.org](http://cthumanities.org). The exercise is stimulating for kids of all ages and the entertainment is elementary, of course.



**PIPE DREAM?** Medieval-style Gillette Castle was constructed of local fieldstone between 1914 and 1919.







## Dressler House Has Big Plans

**COBOURG, Ont.**—*Big things come in small packages.* So says an idiom that could have been written about one modest cottage in Cobourg, Ontario.

The humble home stands at 212 King Street West, along a benign stretch of Ontario Highway 2. Its exterior inspires little excitement, but its interior holds big thrills for movie buffs. Here, on November 9, 1868, this little house became the birthplace of Marie Dressler, future Hollywood superstar. And now, officials say, it is the focus of big plans.



Film fans will recall that Dressler starred in *Tillie's Punctured Romance* (1914)—the first feature-length comedy ever made. She went on to become the highest-paid star in the industry, largely because she was able to view herself with a little humor. “I was too homely for a prima donna and too big for a soubrette,” Dressler wrote in her autobiography, *The Life Story of an Ugly Duckling*. “[T]he fact that I was never a beauty has, in a way, been of advantage.... I never had to park my face in a cold cream jar and I never let a beauty parlor cramp my smile.” Dressler became a comedienne, a clown with a huge heart. The public grew to adore her.

So beloved did she become that in 1937, her former Cobourg home was repurposed as “Dressler House”—a restaurant that served cucumber soup, hazelnut paté, and other fine dishes in an 1860s setting. After fire gutted the structure in January 1989, the Marie Dressler Museum was installed inside. Displayed artifacts included an Adrian gown Dressler owned, vaudeville sheet music, and a life-size scene from *Min and Bill*—her 1930 Oscar-winning film—featuring figures from the Movieland Wax Museum. The idea was big, even if the space was small.

And that brings us to the present day—and the plans released by the Marie Dressler Foundation to upgrade and expand the showcase. Already, a new video about Dressler’s life has been commissioned and a new MARIE DRESSLER WAY street sign installed on the lawn of the Dressler House. What will the new museum be like? Who knows? But we’re sure the little venue will continue to unwrap the past in a big way.

**HOME GROWN:** The Marie Dressler Museum lies inside the Ontario house in which the actress was born.



## To Bee or Not to Bee?

**LYNNWOOD, Wash.**—Wisdom says lightning doesn’t strike twice. But bees apparently do.

In the summer of 2013, we reported that a semitrailer hauling two hundred beehives had overturned on US 97 north of Madras, Oregon, causing a stinging apocalypse. Now, the buzzing buggers have headed north: On April 17, 2015, a truck hauling 458 hives and some fourteen million bees flipped on Interstate 5 near Lynnwood, Washington.

Seriously, folks, we’re all for enjoying the sweet life, but the next time you visit the Northwest, you might want to leave your honey at home.

## Four Score and Perry Como

**TROY, Ohio**—Few figures stand taller in American history than Abraham Lincoln. And this summer, in downtown Troy, Ohio, the sixteenth president looms larger than ever.

Troy has become the first city permitted to publicly exhibit *Return Visit*—a prodigious sculpture fashioned by giant-maker Seward Johnson. The colossal work, which will be displayed in downtown Troy through October, portrays an Honest Abe who is twenty-five feet high.

Johnson initially cast a life-size version of *Return Visit* for the square in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He wanted to stress the importance of Lincoln’s ideas to today’s world, and accomplished this by enlarging his composition to include “the contemporary man”—a benign fellow wearing tan corduroys and a cream sweater—rumored to be Perry Como.

Why did the artist choose to depict the late smooth-crooning singer? Four score and seven answers have been suggested. The most likely reason, however, is because both Lincoln and Como valued honesty, humbleness, and hard work—all qualities that made both men giants in the eyes of the public. ♥



ARK photo courtesy Alex Radelich. Modern Cabins sign photo courtesy Pulaski County Tourism Bureau. Gillette Castle photo by Kevin Pepin. Marie Dressler Museum photo courtesy Cobourg (Ontario) Tourism. *Return Visit* photo by Matt Yu Yao.







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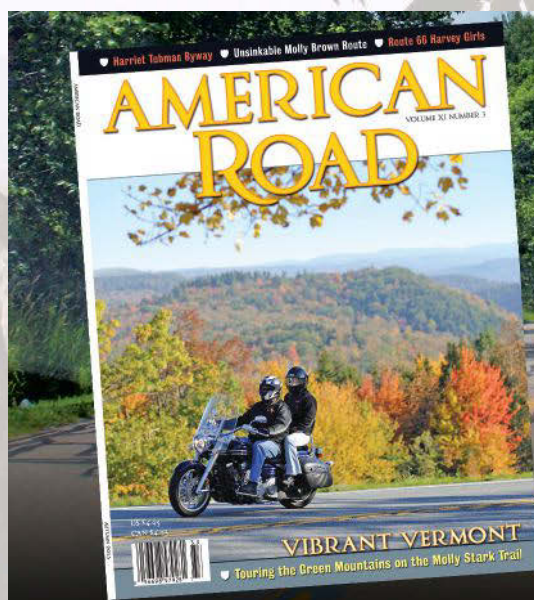
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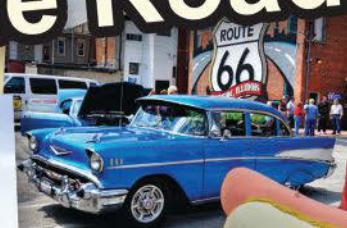
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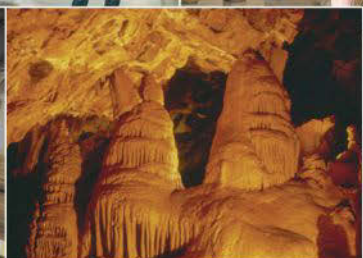
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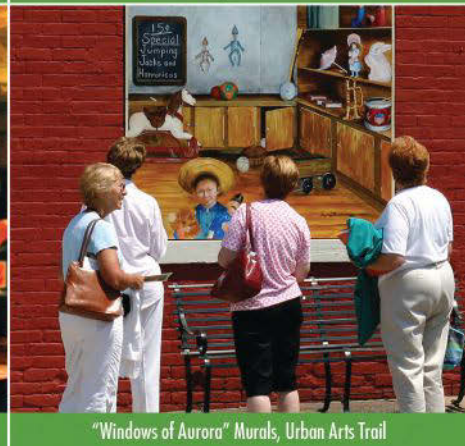
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# Silent screen comedian Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle would have been the first to acknowledge the punchline: All his life, the joke was on him.

His first worldly poke in the nose was delivered by his hard-drinking father, who took one look at the chubby cherub born on March 24, 1887, in Smith Center, Kansas; compared the angel’s ample proportions to his own flimsy physique; and promptly decided that the big-boned brat was not his. To punish his wife for her imagined infidelity, William Arbuckle named the boy Roscoe Conkling after a New York politician infamous for his bedroom affairs.

The relationship between father and son was forever defined by that decision. As the lad grew, dear old dad continued his attempts to sweep his roly-poly issue under the domestic rug, but the boy’s ever-swelling size made him the star of the neighborhood. Pop finally found a way to pack away his troubles when Roscoe was twelve years of age: The unloving parent simply abandoned his son at a hotel in San Jose, California, leaving him with little more than what has been described by biographer Stuart Oderman as “\$2.50 in loose change...and a torn cardboard suitcase.”

The chunky child remained painfully shy. Classmates had called him “Fatty” at school; now hotel staff squeezed him into quarters little larger than a closet and bid him work to earn his keep. Lesser jests might have crushed a softer soul. But Arbuckle was buoyed by an ebullient blessing: He possessed an ethereal singing voice—an angelic tenor that tickled heaven with its high notes. One day, the hotel’s pianist encouraged the plump youngster to enter a talent contest at the local theatre.

Arbuckle won the competition, marking his first successful foray into the world of entertainment. Over the ensuing years, he secured a side job singing illustrated songs at the local vaudeville house, toured the Pantages Theatre circuit throughout the Northwest, and even set sail to perform *The Mikado* onstage in Yokohama, Japan—all courtesy of his golden vocal chords.

Even on the day he met filmmaker Mack Sennett—that madcap movie man who was operating a slapstick factory in the Edendale area of Los Angeles—sweet melody sealed the deal. “[Roscoe] opened the gate at Keystone...and...there wasn’t a soul in sight,” Arbuckle’s first wife, actress Minta Durfee, later remembered. “For no reason, Roscoe began to sing. All of a sudden, a man with a big shock of gray hair and a mouthful of tobacco juice appeared through a door and said, ‘You, big boy, be here tomorrow morning at eight.’”

And so Roscoe was summoned to the silver screen. Nothing more needed to be said or sung. The self-conscious kid from Kansas was about to discover there were things in life more enriching than melody.

There were silents.



## “SILENT MOVIE ROUTE”

TERMINI: Burchard, Nebraska, and Cherryvale, Kansas, via Kansas City, Missouri.

DISTANCE: Approx. 370 miles

SIGNIFICANCE: Route connects significant silent-film-related locations between the Harold Lloyd house of Burchard, Nebraska, and the birthplace of Louise Brooks at Cherryvale, Kansas.

ASSIGNED MARKER:  
A black film strip on a white field



Today, film buffs revere Roscoe Arbuckle for his larger-than-life achievements. He not only became the screen’s biggest funnyman, he became Hollywood’s first comic superstar—260 pounds of grace and agility that filled every flickering frame. Initially, he donned policeman’s garb and embraced the pace of a Keystone Kop. But soon he was teamed with comedienne Mabel Normand at a tempo that allowed character to outshine chaos. In outings such as *Mabel’s Willful Way* (1915) and *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* (1916), the pair charmed audiences and garnered box office gold.

**THE BIG PICTURE:** [Opposite] Roscoe Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, and Luke the Dog star in *Fatty and Mabel Adrift* (1916). Luke was owned by Arbuckle and earned \$150 per week. [Right] The Spanish Colonial-style Granada Theatre of Emporia, Kansas, is merely one of the glorious picture palaces in the Sunflower State built by the dramatic Boller Brothers of Kansas City.





Yet despite Arbuckle's historical profile, visitors who search for traces of him in the city of his birth will find Smith Center quiet on the subject. Inside Wagner Park, the 1879 Old Dutch Mill whistles with the wind—and an annual Old Settlers Day earns its share of chatter—but mention of the area's greatest claim to fame is largely kept mum.

That calamity hit the hefty comedian at the height of his career, courtesy of a 1921 Labor Day party held high above San Francisco on the twelfth floor of the

Three times juries convened to hear the case, and three times Roscoe Conkling Arbuckle stood unconvicted of harming anyone—but the damage was done. The public had learned that it was fun to kill the fatted calf and wallow in the sordid details. Religious groups swore that Arbuckle would never work again. William H. Hays, head of the newly formed Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, banned him from the screen. The silent star once so lovingly applauded now heard nothing but the rage of his own damnation.

“People don’t realize that Hollywood came *from* somewhere,” explains Piqua, Kansas, resident, Shelia Lampe, “and that so many people who shaped the way the movies are made hailed from this area of the Midwest.”





**THE SILENT ROAR:** [Left] At Humboldt, Kansas, motorists encounter the Monarch Cement Company with its golden lion. The statue was cast in 1928—during the time that the fledgling Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was using its silent big cat, Slat, to open its motion pictures [right]. [Below] Cars slip quietly along US Highway 36 east of Hiawatha, Kansas, and through a majestic landscape that leaves sightseers purring.



During the past two decades, silent film aficionados have worked to reclaim and celebrate that legacy. The aforementioned Buster Keaton Museum opened in 1994, and in 1999 officials in Council Bluffs, Iowa, dedicated a Harry Langdon Boulevard to their gentle jester. Then, in 2003, the Harold Lloyd Birthplace began welcoming visitors to Burchard, Nebraska. Its opening—two hundred miles north of the Buster Keaton Museum—gave comedy enthusiasts incentive to drive between the two venues. Inspiration began to shape an informal Silent Movie Route anchored at either end by the shrines to the comedy kings.

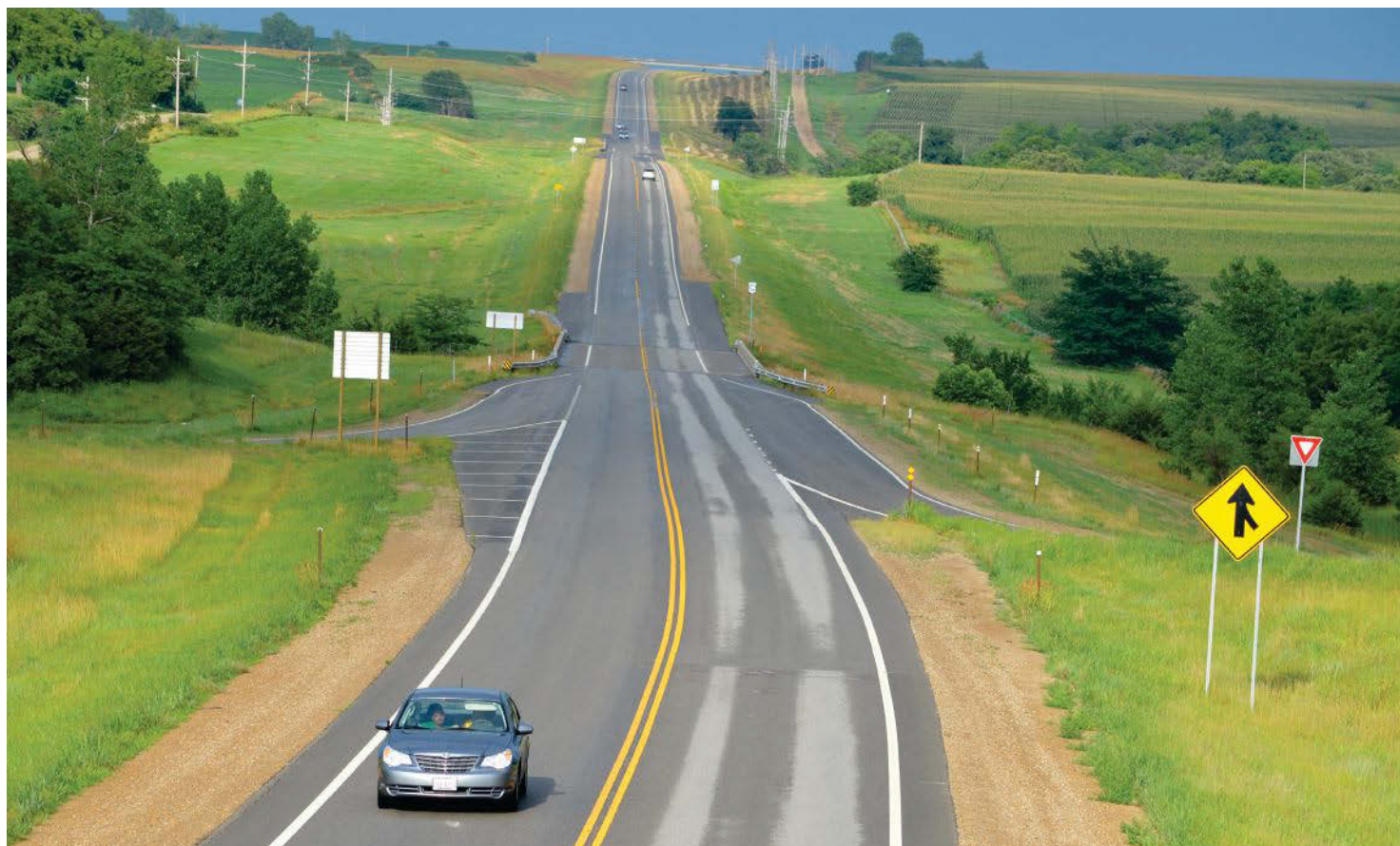
Explorers soon found that other silent giants waited to be discovered enroute. Inquisitive turns revealed that blonde bombshell Jean Harlow was born in Kansas City,

Missouri; flustered funny girl ZaSu Pitts hailed from Parsons, Kansas; and brawling blockhead Wallace Beery grew up on a farm outside Smithville, Missouri. Olathe, Kansas, was the hometown of Charles “Buddy” Rogers, the male lead in *Wings* (1927)—the first film to win a Best Picture Academy Award. Cherryvale, Kansas, nurtured Louise Brooks—the screen nymph whose bobbed black hair and smoldering sex appeal ripped the lid off the cinema with the release of *Pandora’s Box* (1929).

Film styles were also conceived in the area. The wildlife documentary was developed by Martin and Osa Johnson, Kansas natives nearly eaten by the Big Nambas tribe of Malakula, who are today honored with their own tasteful museum at Chanute, Kansas. Walt Disney gave the animated cartoon a boost when he opened his Laugh-O-gram studio in Kansas City,

Missouri, sketching Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella, and other storybook characters on his way to drawing Mickey Mouse. In fact, the mouse himself lived in Kansas City: He was a friendly little squeak who frequented Disney’s art room and begged for bread crumbs. And when he made his cartoon debut, he appeared in many theatres built by the Bollers Brothers—those locally based dramatic architects whose designs told exciting stories in themselves. The Bollers believed that theatre houses were obliged to complement the fanciful scenes flickering across the screen. Accordingly, they decorated their grand picture palaces with Zia sun symbols, Persian ruins, and rococo flourishes borrowed from the baroque court of Louis XIV, King of France.

*Opening text concluded on page 56*







# Harold Lloyd Birthplace

Casual film fans know him as *The Man on the Clock*—a frantic figure clinging precariously to the face of a huge, numbered dial ticking high up in the air. Cinema aficionados study that same celebrated picture and count the ways time has made Harold Lloyd a silent-comedy king.

*Safety Last!*—the 1923 masterpiece that features Lloyd's tussle with that spring-popping, sky-scraping timepiece—incorporates the three innovations that earned the comedian his crown. The first can be called “daredevil comedy”—a subgenre of the funny stuff that placed Lloyd's character in high and flighty places and left him to teeter on flagpoles and totter atop window ledges. The second was Lloyd's character himself—a can-do, go-getting, all-American boy that stood in stark contrast to the inept, slap-happy Keystone grotesques of the day. Lloyd's signature accessory was a pair of horn-rimmed glasses; he looked like he could be anyone's

everyday neighbor, and that down-to-earth aura allowed for the third innovation: Lloyd proved that a comedy and its comedian could be vehicles of romance. Unlike his competitors Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton—who interacted with their female costars in ways mechanical or mawkish—Lloyd married laughs to sweet and sincere love stories. To view his best films—*Grandma's Boy*, *Girl Shy*, *The Freshman*, and *The Kid Brother* among them—is to see how Harry met Sally in the days before movies talked.

Some of the hardworking sincerity that defined Lloyd's screen persona can be traced to his birth in the country's heartland. Lloyd was born in 1893 at Burchard, Nebraska—inside a three-room house that still stands on the unpaved corner of Pawnee and Fourth streets [below]. Burchard itself came alive in 1881 with the arrival of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. Its boom is long over, but the grit of its golden days remains—if only in the glow of memory.







"When Harold Lloyd was a boy, he'd walk the tracks at the depot and sell popcorn to passengers through the train windows," says longtime resident Esther Tegtmeier [right, bottom]. "After they were thirsty, he'd come back and sell them soda."

Tegtmeier serves as docent at The Birthplace of Harold Lloyd house, which was opened to the public as a museum on September 21, 2003. Her own past made her the perfect tour guide: From 1952 to 1982, she and her husband lived in the home. "When we moved in, we didn't realize Harold Lloyd had been born here," she admits. "But when we noticed cars slowing down as they drove by and people stopping to take pictures, we knew something was up." Eventually, the Tegtmeiers established the Harold Lloyd Foundation to see the site preserved.



Today, the house is outfitted with period furniture and mementos from Lloyd's life. [above]. One of the most interesting objects is "The Rose"—a re-creation of a large holiday ornament gifted to Lloyd by actress Gloria Swanson [inset]. After Lloyd found fame, he kept a perennial Christmas tree in his palatial mansion in Beverly Hills.

Before he reached his zenith, of course, Lloyd endured a hard climb to stardom. His ascent began in 1913, and he found success in partnership with producer Hal Roach. But he had to overcome the disastrous day of August 23, 1919, when a routine studio publicity shoot nearly led to his demise. Lloyd was sharpening his derring-do image—posing for photographs with a phony bomb—when the purportedly benign prop exploded. He lost his right thumb and two fingers in the blast. "He was blinded for a long time afterward," Tegtmeier says. "Everyone thought he'd reached the end of his career." But Lloyd recovered, fitted his maimed hand with a lifelike glove, and kept climbing. In fact, he made all of his feature-length thrill-comedies after the accident, performing his own stunts despite the injury and proving that his never-say-"quit" character was not merely part of his act.





# Seneca “Electric Theatre”

Silent movies took some time to knock vaudeville and other live entertainment off the national stage. In Seneca, Kansas, two classic opera houses long vied for the patron's dime and enlivened evenings with chorus numbers and curtain calls. But by 1909, short films began reeling their way into those stuffy spaces. In 1911, the coming of summer saw flickers projected inside an Airdome—a type of ventilated-tent-turned-screening-venue—that suited its shows with an open, informal air. Editors for the *Seneca Courier-Tribune*, unversed in the new technology, simply referred to this flickering chimera as an “Electric Theatre.”

By 1927, the popularity of motion pictures prompted invested parties to raze the opera house adjacent to the Airdome and replace it with a permanent picture palace. The Liberty Theatre—as the cinema came to be named—reared its red brick façade at 301 Main Street [right, top]. Remodeled and renamed during the 1950s—and eventually rearranged to accommodate two screens—it survives today as the Seneca Twin Theater [below].

Seneca's Smith Hotel once served as the first Pony Express home station west of St. Joseph, Missouri. Appropriately, the city boasts a Pony Express Museum and maintains another important period treasure inside its local post office: At 607 Main Street, art lovers find *Men and Wheat*, a WPA New Deal mural completed in 1939 by proletarian painter Joe Jones [right, bottom]. Initially, the Seneca postmaster criticized Jones' composition: Wheat farming, he argued, was evocative of western Kansas, where the crop was grown. To mollify the mailman, Jones painted scenes of generic farming into the mural's background.

Seneca's deep hand-dug well draws its share of interest, but the vehicle that truly puts the finishing sheen on the town's showy side is parked inside the Seneca Fire Department Museum. There, a restored 1922 Stutz fire truck [right, center] brings to mind madcap chases perpetrated by the Keystone Cops and their kin, and by extension, Sennett star Mabel Normand, who famously owned and drove a racing Stutz Bearcat during the days she starred in films with corpulent, Kansas-born clown Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle.





# Davis Memorial



John Milburn Davis was not a movie star. He never served as a cinematographer for a Hollywood studio. He didn't direct casts of thousands as did D. W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille. But John Milburn Davis certainly understood silent drama. The scenes he selected to tell his story—set in stone inside Mount Hope Cemetery on the eastern outskirts of Hiawatha, Kansas—still enchant passersby who behold their epic scope.

Pride and poignancy emanate from those images—a series of eleven life-size likenesses of Davis and his beloved wife, Sarah Hart, set atop their gravesites. Sculpted from white granite, the effigies depict the couple as they appeared through the seasons of their lives—from their wedding day to their eighteenth anniversary and beyond, as time inevitably turned young love old.

When John and Sarah first fell in love, he was a farmer and she was the daughter of his employer. They married over the objections of her parents, and during the ensuing half century, grew wealthy in their own right. They enjoyed the rich and rare union only soulmates

can claim, and after Sarah died in 1930, John yearned to commemorate their partnership. He hired an artist to fashion figures of Sarah and himself to stand at her grave, and was so pleased with these works that he ordered a second pair of statues—and a third—until he'd filled the grounds with a somber parade.

Area residents condemned the sculptures as a waste of money, but John just handed out calling cards that read, *Oh, Lord, help me keep my damn nose out of other people's business*, and kept adding to his tribute.

Since John's own death in 1947, the Davis Memorial has aptly been called a "Love Letter in Stone." Each vignette is touching. In one scene, John poses without his beard—he'd lost it to a brush fire in 1898; in another, Sarah kneels over John's grave transformed into an angel, a weeping creature plucked from a paradise lost. The most poignant picture is the last in the series: Beard reclaimed, eyes icy with age, John sits—a widower—next to the seat left empty by his deceased spouse. Coldly labeled *The Vacant Chair*, that silent space speaks volumes about the human condition and a role too many will tragically play.







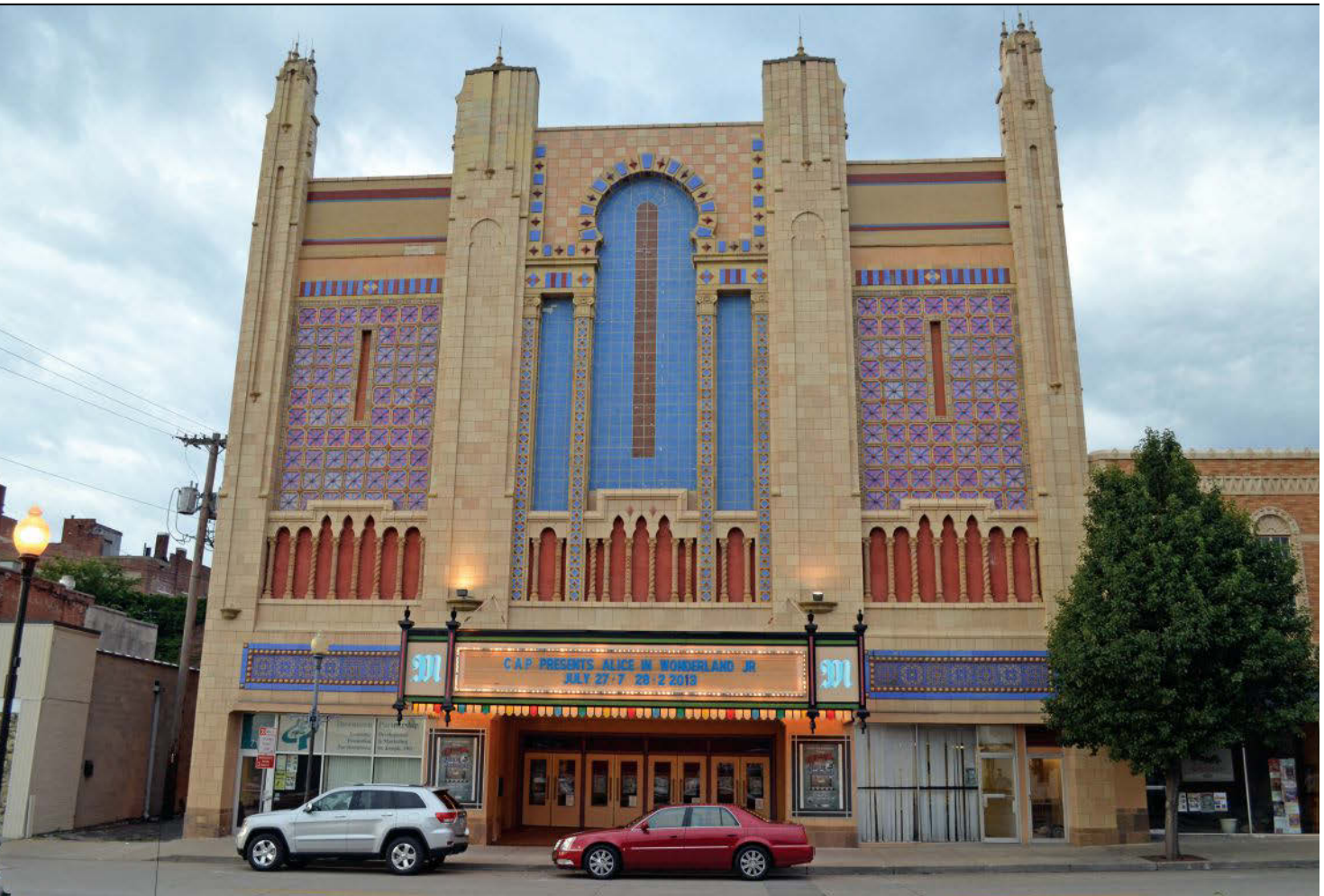
# Boller Bros. Missouri Theatre

**B**eauty queen Georgia Hale was born in St. Joseph, Missouri. She earned silent film immortality for her work in one role—that of the Klondike dancehall girl in Charlie Chaplin’s masterpiece, *The Gold Rush* (1925). The film was a glittering nugget chipped out of cold crystal—an Alaskan happily-ever-after made of blizzards, snowballs, and icy slopes that kept Hale wrapped in a warm coat for most of its running time.

Ironically, many Missourians who attended the theatre to see their leading lady viewed the film dressed in similar fashion. *The Gold Rush* began screening in the Midwest during late autumn and continued to play through the shivers of winter. “Early movie theatres didn’t have heaters,” says St. Joseph resident Frank Polleck. “My grandmother talked of going to see shows during cold months. The audience wore coats in their seats. They’d watch for a while, then go to the lobby to warm themselves around a potbelly stove.”

Such situations, Polleck suggests, inspired theatre architects Carl and Robert Boller [left, top] to construct big and beautiful buildings that were comfortable for moviegoers. And that philosophy led directly to the creation of the Missouri Theatre—the St. Joseph jewel that made its debut in 1927 and continues to wow crowds [below].

Polleck serves as Technical Director at the Missouri. He knows all of the building’s secrets, admires most of them, and can talk for hours about the Boller Brothers’ story. Carl and Robert were the sons of German immigrants who appeared to have pulled their theatrical sensibilities out of thin air. Their oldest brother, Will, became a vaudeville magician who worked his best wonders as a scenery painter. Carl joined Will’s troupe and became a set designer in 1898. He exhibited such an aptitude for understanding audience seating and sight lines that he was asked to assist in the design of the La Belle Theatre of Pittsburg, Kansas, in 1903.





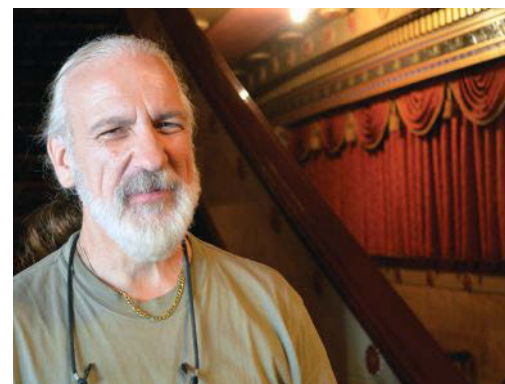


So was born a construction company destined to redefine America's theatrical landscape. Robert—the youngest Boller—joined Carl in 1905, and the brothers went on to design hundreds of theatres across the country. Most Boller picture palaces were built in Missouri and Kansas—many were conceived as atmospheric auditoriums that freely borrowed their ornamentation from faraway times and places. Inside the Jayhawk Theatre of Topeka, Kansas, a painting of the Greek goddess Demeter was installed above the proscenium, while in Kansas City, the interior of the Granada Theatre was made to resemble a Mediterranean courtyard. “The flavors in this building are Arabian, Assyrian, Hittite, and Persian,” Polleck says as he discusses design elements incorporated within the Missouri's one-of-a-kind style.



That composition can be credited to ceramics sculptor Waylande Gregory—a young genius who was hardly more than a teen when the Bollers hired him to shape the Missouri's rosettes and reliefs. Gregory had already fashioned a statue of Pan for Kansas City and installed an Aztec altar inside the dining room of the President Hotel. He felt at ease in exotic territory, and in molding the Missouri, looked for inspiration in the ruins of ancient Babylon and Persepolis. Accordingly, he placed chalk-plaster lamassus—human-faced, lion-bodied guardians—on either side of the stage [right, top]. A frieze above them features sacrificial rams kneeling at the Tree of Mystery [inset], while the heavenly bulls used over and over again could have been lifted hoof and horn from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* [right, center.]

The saga of the Missouri Theatre continues to impress, too. Closed as a movie house in 1970, it was renovated and reopened as a performance venue in 2002. Today, Frank Polleck [right, below] enjoys showing visitors the behind-the-scenes mechanizations that include the old heating-and-air-conditioning system hidden behind plaster screens—perks that ensured, no matter how cool the show, a snowball never had a chance here.





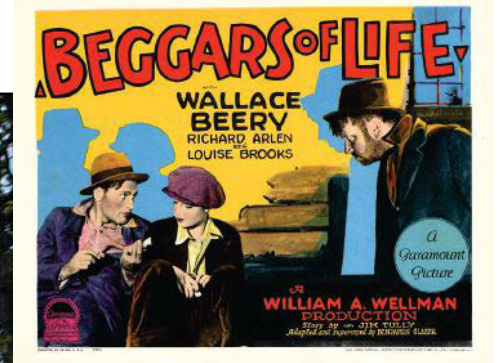
# Smithville

Wallace Beery was seldom celebrated for the quiet moments he contributed to the screen. Big and beefy, with something of the brute or bumpkin instilled in nearly every part he played, Beery was a larger-than-life character actor who effortlessly filled a frame. In *The Champ* (1931), he's a beaten-down heavyweight boxer who battles the bottle and his own bruises for the sake of his son (Jackie Cooper). In *Min and Bill* (1930), he's a lovable barnacle, the captain of a fishing trawler with his soggy heart captured by self-described "sea cow" Marie Dressler.

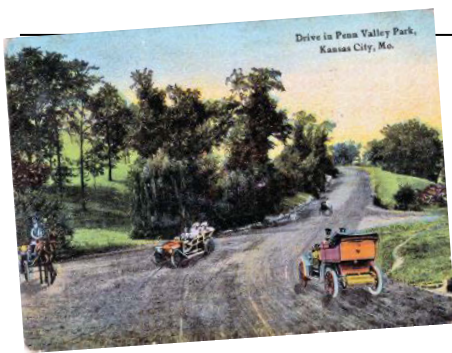
Yet before Beery tickled talkies with his midwestern drawl, he enjoyed a long career as a silent actor. Born in 1885 into a farming family near Smithville, Missouri, Beery ran away from home to become a circus elephant trainer, then tested his acting talent on Broadway before moving to Chicago to make movies for the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company. He found his first fame in 1914 dressed in drag and styled as "Sweedie"—a hilariously Herculean Swedish maid—in a

series of slapstick one-reelers. He starred with Douglas Fairbanks in *Robin Hood* (1922), then saw a string of successes that teamed him with Kansas-born stars such as comedy genius Buster Keaton (*Three Ages*, 1923), doleful damsel ZaSu Pitts (*Casey at the Bat*, 1927), and bobbed beauty Louise Brooks (*Beggars of Life*, 1928).

Smithville merchants continue to take pride in Beery's local roots, although their town would look just as beautifully bricked without him. Outlaw Jesse James grew up seventeen miles away on a farm that has since turned tourist attraction, while Smithville Lake [below] boasts more than 175 miles of shoreline to serve boaters and beach bums. On South Commercial Avenue, the American Angus Hall of Fame sings a lowing ode to the stocky cattle that Scotsman George Grant brought to the area in 1873. Those bovines have had their own Hollywood fans; Julie Andrews, Bing Crosby, and Fred Gwynne were all Angus breeders. The last, of course, was famed for his own big and beefy performances as Herman Munster—the brutish bumbler on the 1960s television sitcom *The Munsters*.







# Penn Valley Park

**F**arina, Jean Darling, Joe Cobb, Harry Spears, Mary Ann, Wheezer.... Many fans of the *Our Gang* comedy series can name the little rascals who played with Pete the Pup in 1928 [bottom]. Few, however, have heard of the day the popular ragamuffins came to Kansas City, Missouri, as part of a well-staged publicity stunt.

The setup was simple: The *Kansas City Journal-Post* held a contest to select twelve *Our Gang* look-alikes from the local population. Director Irving Browning and staff were dispatched from Hollywood to shoot a film with these winners on the grounds of Penn Valley Park. The resulting two-reeler—*Pie Eatin' Champeens*—was never meant to be an official entry in the series; it was made as a type of informal screen test that allowed producer Hal Roach to search for fresh kid star faces even as it promoted the cast he had.

The short was shown at Kansas City's Boller-Brothers-built Midland Theatre along with a second—*The Our Gang Shopping Tour*—made at the same time to promote local businesses. The real *Our Gang* kids appeared in person as part of the show—and may have even visited Penn Valley Park themselves. At the time, the park's Liberty Memorial [right] was less than two years old—and the 271-foot tribute to World War I veterans was as impressive then as it is today.







# Laugh-O-Gram Studio

Ask any dedicated Disneyphile—preferably one donning a 1950s pair of Mouseketeer ears—and that dyed-in-the-felt fan will likely share the traditional tale: Mickey Mouse, the world’s most beloved cartoon star, was born in the South Central Business District of Kansas City, Missouri.

The animated account is typically traced as follows: Walt Disney, a Chicago-born aspiring artist in his early twenties, was working toward fame, frame by frame, inside his Laugh-O-gram studio at 1127 East 31st Street. The building was new, but it was not empty: There was a mouse in the house. Disney spied the cute critter searching for crumbs below his drawing board and began feeding the squeak bits of his own meager lunch, thereby making a friend. Walt named his new pet “Mortimer,” but later—when he thought to draw the rodent as an anthropomorphic character—his wife, Lillian, insisted “Mickey” had a more dignified ring.

Some passages of the story are probably apocryphal, but others are undoubtedly drawn from fact. Disney’s tenure in Kansas City represented a time when he was actively searching to find his own fairy tale. His Laugh-O-gram Studio—located on the second floor of the McConahy Building [opposite, top]—was meant to mark the start of that rainbow. Walt had moved to town with his family in 1910 when he was nine years of age. He attended Benton Grammar School until 1917, took a job with the Gray Advertising Company, and in 1920, went to work for the Kansas City Slide Company—a firm that designed animated advertisements for motion picture theatres. Disney conceived his first unique cartoon inspiration as an after-hours, independent project: He drew a series of cartoons lampooning local events and artfully sold a bundle of the satirical reels to Frank L. Newman, the uncontested king of Kansas City theatres. Disney called these short offerings “Newman Laugh-O-grams.”







By the autumn of 1921, Disney was moonlighting with his own outfit—Kaycee Studios—and operating out of space snuggled above a streetcar barn. He filmed live-action footage for Pathé News, but his heart remained in his inkwell. In the spring of 1922, he quit his day job and incorporated Laugh-O-gram Films, Inc., filling the new studio with his own stable of animators. Beginning with *Little Red Riding Hood*, Disney released a series of modernized fairy tales under the Laugh-O-gram label. Each marked advances in cartoon art. In *The Four Musicians of Bremen*, for example, a swordfish with a removable saber for a snout becomes one of Disney's earliest personable villains. In *Jack the Giant Killer*, the hero and his crew are tossed by a tempest that anticipates the storm sequences in *Fantasia* (1940).



A contract signed with a dubious distributor doomed the studio. A last-ditch attempt to stave off bankruptcy failed, but opened a door to Disney's future: The final film fashioned at Laugh-O-gram was the combination cartoon and live-action short *Alice's Wonderland* (1923), which told the story of a little girl who dreams she has entered Cartoonland. Five-year-old Virginia Davis [right, below] was hired to play the tot. After Laugh-O-gram closed—and Disney hopped a train to California—this short earned him a Hollywood contract to produce more Alice Comedies.

In recent years, the Laugh-O-gram building was repaired by the nonprofit group “Thank You, Walt Disney.” Plans are in place to install a museum inside. Meanwhile, the spirit of the maestro colors the rest of Kansas City: The water inside the J. C. Nichols Memorial Fountain [inset] is occasionally brightened with dye that evokes its own *Fantasia*; while downtown appears to be painted with a brush. Tourists are permitted to drive past Walt's boyhood home at 3028 Bellefontaine Avenue [right, top], provided they don't disturb the residents. Look for a picture of Mickey forever standing in an attic window—a mouse in a house that marked the start for a man who knew how magic kingdoms were made.





# Olathe

Anyone who has been obliged to improvise understands the term “winging it.” The dramatic idiom was defined in an 1885 issue of *Stage* magazine, where it was described as an act that a poorly prepared thespian might flap his way through, given a few uplifting whispers from offstage.

Community players who need prompting around Olathe, Kansas, however, might just as easily summon to mind the expression “On a wing and a prayer.” Oh, sure: That phrase is tied

to World War pilots, but so is Olathe’s claim to fame. Their stage performances are played inside a venerated chapel, built in 1870 as the Reformed Presbyterian Church and known today as the Buddy Rogers Family Playhouse [below]. And said Charles “Buddy” Rogers was a hometown hero—a leading man and jazz musician, who sailed to fame in 1927 in the Paramount Pictures war epic *Wings*.

Rogers was born in Olathe in 1904. As a boy, he was given a free pass to the local theatre because he delivered its publicity posters.



Educated at the University of Kansas, he was studying journalism when the Paramount School of Acting gave him a screen test. The studio rushed him into work on W. C. Fields’ automotive comedy *So’s Your Old Man* before putting him in a plane aimed at stardom.

*Wings* tells the tale of fighter pilots who dare great heights for love and duty. Rogers plays Jack Powell—the sharpest ace in the sky—a role for which he was taught to fly a plane. Over and again, director William A. Wellman sent him up into the blue with a camera bolted to the fuselage of his craft, trained on his face. “I’d have to find the German planes and get the right clouds behind me, and I’d fight the Germans [until] I’d run out of film,” Rogers said of the dazzling dogfighting sequences.

*Wings* became the first film to win a Best Picture Academy Award, and it forever defined Rogers’ reputation. In 1977, when the Olathe Civic Theatre Association purchased the aforementioned church and transformed it into a playhouse, Rogers not only gave his name to the venue; he gave his money. Today, theatregoers will find a pair of boots enshrined in the lobby—flying footwear worn during *Wings’* sky-high takes—that are still encouraging up-and-coming actors to soar.



# Lawrence



f the motion picture *Wings* (1927) set the bar high for aerial photography in a war movie, cinematographer Elmer Dyer was right on its tail [left]. Born in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1892, Dyer moved to Hollywood at age fourteen, tinkered with newsreels, trained his eye on westerns for the Bull's Eye Film Corporation, then truly hit his target when he turned his lens toward the sky.

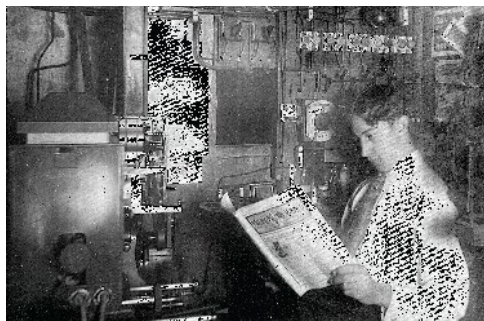
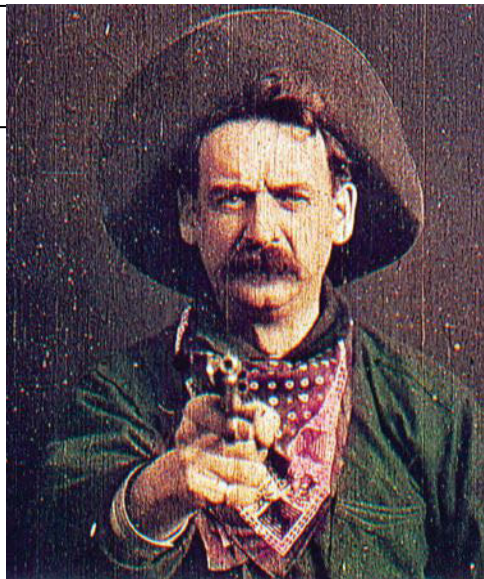
Dyer earned his greatest fame for enduring the deadly production that damned *Hell's Angels* (1930) to infamy. Like *Wings*, the film was shot as a silent saga about World War I fighter pilots. But unlike its predecessor, *Hell's Angels* was cursed with catastrophe: Four members of its crew plummeted to their deaths during the dizzying dogfights. At one point, stunt pilots refused to execute a perilous sequence, so director Howard Hughes climbed into the cockpit, performed the trick, then crashed his plane and landed himself in the hospital. Sometime after he recovered from his fractured skull, Hughes heard that the advent

of sound had overtaken his epic—a technical glitch that obliged him to lay noise over the flight footage and reshoot dialogue scenes with talking actors. Jean Harlow was subsequently cast in her first credited role. She would become so popular with servicemen that when Laurel and Hardy made *Beau Hunks* (1931) the following year, the comedy setup suggested that all men who join the foreign legion do so out of unrequited love for “Jeanie Weenie.”

Other Lawrence film connections include the Granada Theatre—a 1928 Boller Brothers vaudeville house restyled for flickers in 1934 [left, center] and Comanche [below] the horse often touted as the sole survivor of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Killed by colic in 1891, the steed was given a military funeral and his remains were sent to the University of Kansas to be displayed in its Natural History Museum. A few years later, inventor Thomas Edison recorded more for posterity when he filmed Buffalo Bill Cody and Sitting Bull [inset] at the former's Wild West Show.







# Plaza Cinema

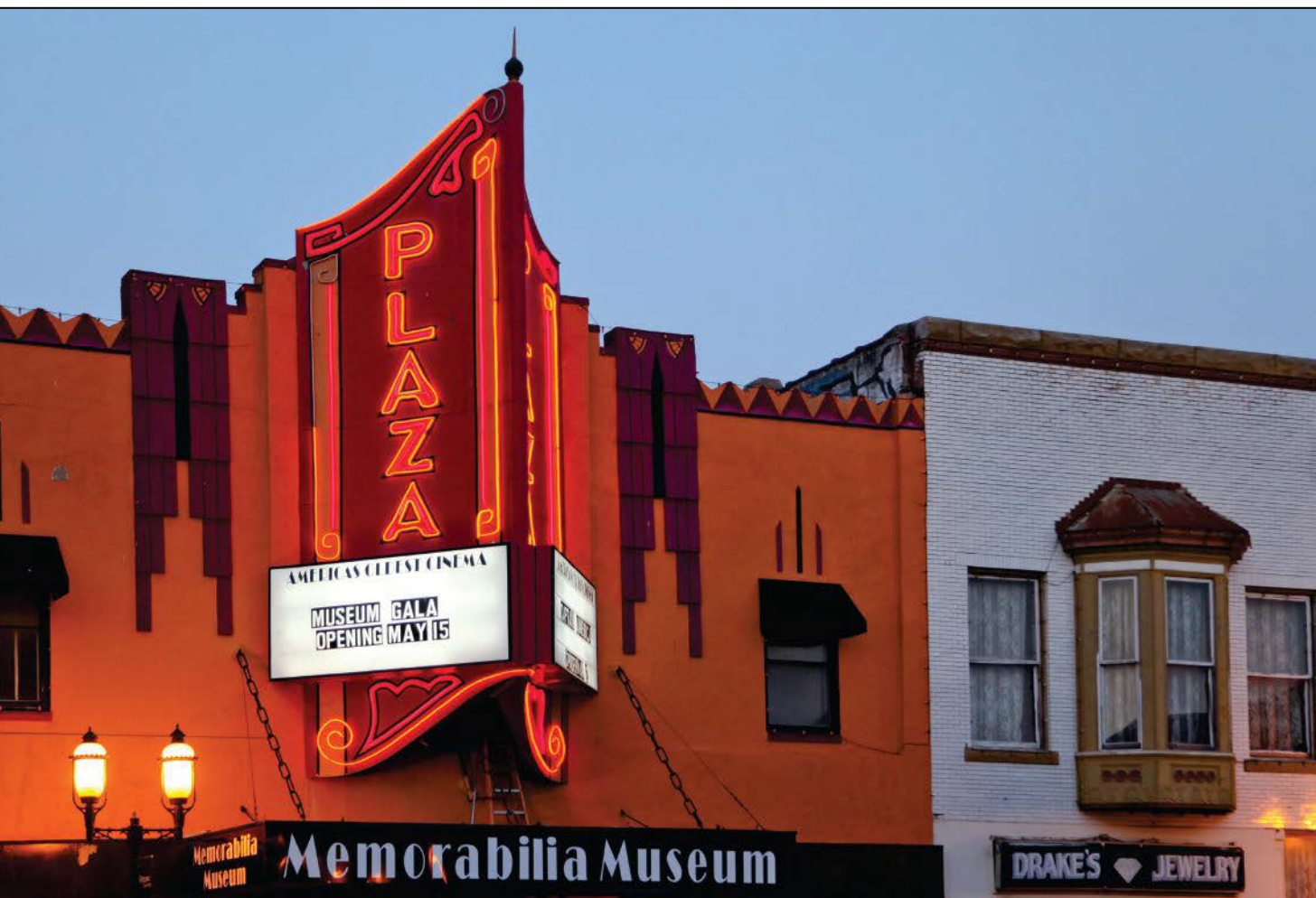
Everyone knew the Plaza Cinema was old, but no one imagined that the venerable picture palace in Ottawa, Kansas, might be the oldest continuously operating movie theatre in the country.

The secret had faded away like the final frame in an early Billy Bitzer movie—and then circumstance brought it back to light. In 2013, a collection of vintage camera negatives was donated to the Franklin County Historical Society. When the prints were developed, they revealed a series of striking images—signs, streets, and people—that exposed the Plaza’s backstory. Researchers compared historical records with the images and discovered that silent movies had first been screened on-site during November 1905. That made the Plaza three years older than the oldest cinema listed at Guinness World Records.

Even more intriguing were the details of that debut. Images revealed that the 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery* had been shown in

a Kinodrome pitched in the middle of Main Street [opposite, top]. The Kinodrome was a projection machine marketed by Chicago-based exhibitor George Spoor, who distributed moving pictures produced by New York’s Edison Studios to venues around the Midwest. *The Great Train Robbery* was one of his biggest moneymakers—a ten-minute blockbuster filled with bullets and bandits that is today considered the first American western. Audiences were overwhelmed by its realism: Women fainted and men dove under chairs when the villain pointed a pistol at the camera and pulled the trigger [left, top].

After the Kinodrome’s engagement, electrician Fred Beeler began screening movies inside the cinema’s present building. By 1907, the theatre was listed in the city directory as the Bijou, and newspapers were commending the entertainment. “The Moving Pictures and the Illustrated Songs are given twelve times each day,” said *The Ottawa Guardian*. “The show is first-class in every particular.”

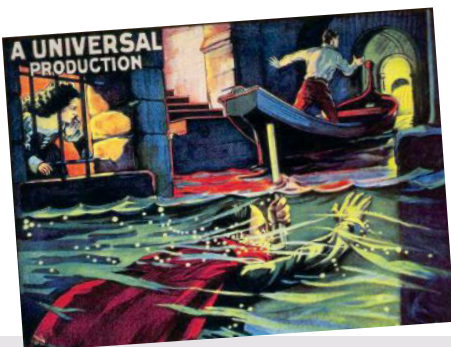






When religious leaders objected to the fiendish, flickering films, the paper stood by its words, but cinema management booked *Le vie et passion de Jésus-Christ*—a French film directed by Ferdinand Zecca that boasted thirty-eight scenes of Biblical bliss—and modified the program of illustrated songs to include “Rock of Ages” and “The Holy City.” The piety wasn’t permanent. By September of 1910, the picture house was playing South Sea Island travelogues narrated by explorer Martin E. Johnson and grabbing attention with headlines that screamed LEPROSY AND ELEPHANTITIS...CANNIBALISM...NAKED SAVAGES AND THEIR WEIRD DANCES.... Attendees wondered if they were going to hell in their opera hats after all.

Things heated up one night in 1917, when a fire broke out on the operator’s platform.



To quell the pandemonium, pianist Harry Mapes remained at his post and bravely plunked away until everyone had escaped to safety, then shoved the blistering piano out the back door. The theatre was rebuilt—and revamped again in 1934, when it adopted the Plaza name.

These days, the Plaza has become a place of pilgrimage for film buffs. Management has opened a Movie Memorabilia Museum inside the screen gem and filled it with original movie scripts, props, and posters. Highlights include lithographs from Lon Chaney’s 1925 version of *The Phantom of the Opera* [inset] and wand boxes from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (2001). Of particular interest is an exhibit that depicts Bela Lugosi lounging around his coffin as the dapper Count from *Dracula* (1931) surrounded by bats and macabre bric-a-brac [right, bottom]. “We even have sand from the castle of Vlad the Impaler,” says Executive Director Peach Madl.

Future plans call for the creation of a twenty-minute documentary that will explain to visitors the origins of film and the Plaza’s place in that history. Producers are considering including *The Great Train Robbery* in that presentation, reviving the smash that made the Plaza a hit in the first place.





# Kansas Silent Film Festival

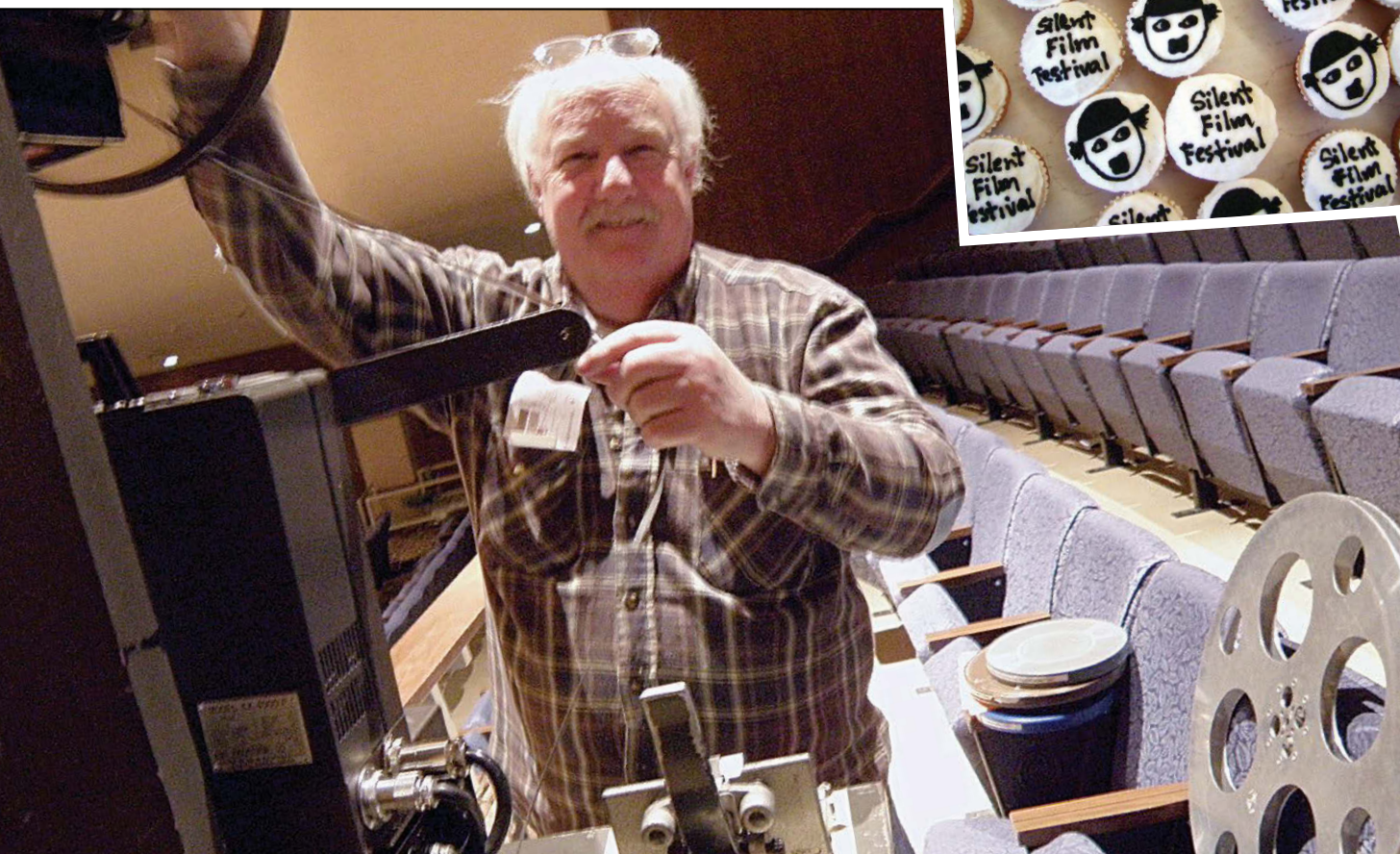
Hollywood, California, would not exist if not for the imagination of Daeida Wilcox [right, top]. The onetime resident of Topeka, Kansas, moved to the West Coast with her husband, Harvey, in 1884. He was a real estate speculator who purchased a pretty parcel of Cahuenga Valley property leafy with apricot and fig trees. She called the tract “Hollywood” after a utopia she’d heard about somewhere back East. Then she named one of its main streets Sunset Boulevard and prayed for a picture-perfect future.

Of course, Daeida’s wish became a reality. Hollywood has long since become a place where happy endings are framed. And that’s why it’s fitting that a celebration meant to look back on the film industry’s earliest days is held in Topeka—that midwestern capital whence Daeida Wilcox came and where the state seal still proclaims *Ad astra per aspera*—“Through hardship to the stars.”

The Kansas Silent Film Festival was founded by Jim Rhodes and Jim McShane, two librarians who worked within the local library system and shared a passion for early movies.

In 1997, they brought together a small group of aficionados who had met at the Boller Brothers’ Granada Theatre of Kansas City, including Marvin Faulwell, a dentist who moonlighted as a silent film organist; Denise Morrison, a Kansas City Museum archivist; and Penny Northern, a retired film librarian. Using projection equipment provided by local car dealer John Vanhollebeke, they gathered inside the 1,110-seat White Concert Hall on the campus of Washburn University. There they screened such classics as Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), F. W. Murnau’s *Sunrise* (1927), and Buster Keaton’s *The General* (1925)—and started a late-winter tradition that remains fun and free to this day.

In recent years, Richard Every of Wichita [below] has served as the event projectionist. Screenings have been sweetened with Charlie Chaplin cupcakes [right, bottom]. A sister festival called Silents in the Cathedral plays each October inside gothic Grace Cathedral and puts a Halloween spin on its hushed repertoire: Titles recently screened have included *The Bat* (1926) and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923).





# Emporia



In the days before Hugh Hefner poked his pipe into publishing—and a bunny was something that showed its tail at Easter time—the physical figure of female perfection was measured by Mack Sennett's *Bathing Beauties*. The Keystone Studios' boss assembled his first roster of water nymphs in 1915 and bid them frolic on the beach, before his rolling cameras, in costumes the *Kansas City Star* claimed were "never seen on anyone with real swimming intentions." All the girls were shapely; most were savvy. But few boasted comedic skills like Thelma Hill of Emporia, Kansas.



Sennett himself proclaimed Hill the perfect bathing girl in a *Newspaper Enterprise* article published in August of 1924. "The boyish figure remains the ideal toward which misses and matrons will strive," he declared in that puff piece. "Pronounced curves? No. Wasp-waist? Also, no. Slight and lithe, grace in slender motion, more streamlined than otherwise—this is the coming style."

Sennett was serious about Hill's appeal and set out to make her a star. She appeared alongside studio headliners such as Harry

Langdon and Ben Turpin then hit the high point of her career in 1927, when Sennett cast her as the titular lead in the comic-strip-inspired series *Toots and Casper*. At the same time, Hill's old home town was constructing the Emporia Granada Theatre [left, center]—a Spanish Colonial Revival-style showplace that exuded typical Boller Brothers opulence. The terra cotta detail of its façade incorporated five clowns in its designs—aligning this movie house with filmdom's funny side.

Unfortunately, the chuckles ran dry for bathing-beauty-turned-comedian Thelma Hill. Failure to retain her popularity after the advent of talkies exacerbated a drinking problem that led to her death at age thirty-one. In Emporia, her memory is perhaps best appreciated at Peter Pan Park—a 52-acre refuge donated to the city in 1927 by famous newspaper editor William Allen White, who wrote of his own lost daughter, "she was a Peter Pan who refused to grow up." Farther south, along Kansas 99, the graceful arch of Soden's Grove Bridge [below] has crossed Cottonwood River since the mid-1920s, when—as Sennett noted—delicate lines made all the difference.







# Buster Keaton Museum

Silent comedian Buster Keaton had a lifelong love of trains. And that's hardly surprising, considering his birth occurred during something akin to a whistlestop.

Keaton's parents—Joseph Hallie and Myra Edith—were vaudeville performers who earned their living tracking around the country and selling miracle tonics in a medicine show. They'd set up their tent in Piqua, Kansas, and prepared for their performance, when the wind rose, the tent blew away, and Myra Keaton promptly went into labor.

"They moved Mrs. Keaton into a nearby house," says local resident Shelia Lampe, "and she gave birth. There are still descendants of the midwife who delivered Buster who are living in Piqua today."

The Keatons moved on from the tiny Kansas community—leaving Buster to grow up with the impression that his birthplace had been blown off the map during the storm. Even sixty-five years later, when he penned his

autobiography, *My World of Slapstick*, Keaton thought the site of his nativity was gone with the wind. "He believed the cyclone had obliterated the town because he was looking for 'Pickway,'" says Lampe. "That's the way Piqua is pronounced. Then, in 1963, he performed at the Kansas State Fair. He and his wife, Eleanor, were driving home when they passed through here and saw the sign for Piqua. They say Eleanor was at the wheel, and she stopped so suddenly that Buster thought she'd hit a cow."

Lampe explains how the small-town citizens were initially unnerved when they spied the long black car sliding along their streets. ("They thought the mafia had come to town," she laughs. "Everyone stayed inside and pulled down their windowshades.") Eventually, Keaton's identity became known, and the comedian realized his lifelong wish to see the place of his birth. A photo was snapped of Keaton standing in front of the town's yellow depot because the house in which Buster was born had been razed.







During that visit, Lampe's grandmother met the Great Stone Face. Years later, it was her memories that inspired Lampe and her husband, Don, to establish Piqua's Buster Keaton Museum.

The repository shares space with the headquarters for Rural Water Office #1. The Keaton memorabilia is largely consigned to one room, but the atmosphere is homey and charming. Curator Judy Westerman, who is also manager of the utility company, welcomes museum visitors from 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, but this generous soul and bonafide Buster fan has been known to show the collection to guests during off hours, when her schedule permits.

The scope of the museum is impressive. Photos and posters trace Keaton's childhood days on the stage (he became a player in his

parents' vaudeville act before he could walk); his film apprenticeship under Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle; his golden era as America's premier silent movie clown; and his artistic struggles during the early days of talking pictures, teamed with gabby Jimmy Durante. A tile mosaic completed by area artisan William Linde celebrates Keaton's birth [right, top], while a scene painted by Canadian director Gerald Potterton takes its inspiration from *The Railrodder*—a 1965 comedic travelogue Keaton made for the National Film Board of Canada [top]. The prize of the collection is a genuine "life" mask of Keaton's face—a cast made by movie studio technicians so they could practice lighting the features of the Great Stone Face [right, below].

Outside, a historical marker recounts Keaton's Piqua connection, while on a corner not too far away, the old MKT depot is now owned by the Piqua Farmers Coop. Its once vibrant yellow hue is gone, replaced today by peeling white paint, but Shelia and Don Lampe hope to see the day when it houses a museum [inset]. Until that time, it will remain a part of Piqua's whirling history and another marker to a man who passed through town with the speed of a tornado on his way to fast and lasting fame.







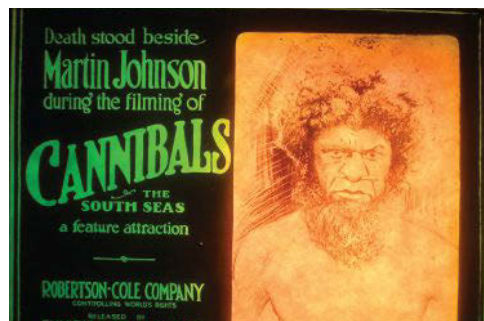
# Johnson Safari Museum

Nagapate didn't look like a matinee idol. Yet there he stood in 1918, glaring from movie screens everywhere. Hair piled wildly atop his head, beard bristling unchecked toward his chest, he regarded audiences with hungry eyes. And that was hardly odd; after all, he *was* a cannibal.

The Malakula Island chief—leader of the Big Nambas tribe—had been photographed mere months earlier by pioneer documentary filmmakers Martin and Osa Johnson [top, left] and now starred in his own exotic feature, *Among the Cannibal Isles of the South Seas* [left, center]. Ads proclaimed the picture “photographed at the risk of life”—and the hype wasn't hyperbole. During the filming expedition, Martin and Osa might very well have been eaten if a British gunboat had not fortuitously appeared offshore and frightened the Big Nambas—just at the moment that Nagapate was making the ceremonial decision to break for lunch.

The story is merely one of many recounted at the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum of Chanute, Kansas—a showplace dedicated to the husband-and-wife team who developed the wildlife documentary. Their adventures began in 1907, when *The Call of the Wild* novelist Jack London sought a cook to accompany him on an exotic voyage to the South Seas. Martin Johnson, a photographer's son from Independence, Kansas, got the job and found himself exploring the Solomon Islands aboard the *Snark*—a custom-made, two-masted sailing vessel. London fell ill, and the journey was cut short, but the industrious Martin returned to the States and produced a traveling show about the ill-fated odyssey. Charging ten cents for admission, he exhibited still photographs and film footage taken during the trip, introducing Americans to a world of giant crocodiles, flying fish, and native islanders.

Martin met his own showstopper during a stint in Chanute, Kansas. She was Osa Helen Leighty, the daughter of a local lawyer.







The pair fell in love, married, and decided to tour and film together. Their initial expedition to Malakula in 1917 became the first of many trips taken to the farthest corners of the globe.

“Osa and Martin balanced each other,” says museum director Conrad Froehlich [right, bottom]. “He was more of the introverted artist, focused on his filming, his photography. Osa was the outgoing girl-next-door. She could organize these large, complex safaris and keep them moving.”

The Johnsons completed their finest work in eastern and central Africa during a string of four expeditions that began in 1921 and ended in 1929. During those travels, they toured Kenya, Uganda, and the Congo, training their lenses on elephants, lions, and gorillas, capturing images that led to such films as *Trailing African Wild Animals* (1923), *Simba:*

*The King of the Beasts* (1928), and *Congorilla* (1932). Patience was key to the Johnsons’ success: They often sat in blinds from dawn till dusk and ate waffles Osa prepared with ostrich eggs [right, top]. But reel by reel—by standing in harm’s way and slowly cranking away—they developed the travelogue as an art form, a tool used to teach.

“They brought the diversity of the world back to the US,” Froehlich says. “Up until that time, Africa was considered a dangerous, foreboding, evil place. The Johnsons battled that ‘Tarzan’ image and revealed lands of different customs and terrains.”

Even Nagapate was impressed with their achievements when the Johnsons returned to Malakula a few years after their initial meeting and faced the man who had almost made them into a meal. “Oddly enough,” Osa wrote, “Nagapate was now a screen personality to me rather than a savage.... [He] could see we held no grudge for his apparent culinary intentions on our first visit, and became almost genial.” The Johnsons set up a screen and projector on the island and showed the film *Among the Cannibal Isles of the South Seas* to the chief and his tribe, earning reactions of awe and wonder as the Nambas saw images of themselves flickering in the light.





# Erie Dinosaur Park

Leapin' lizards! What does a 1914 animated film drawn by comic-strip legend Winsor McCay have in common with a 1990s sculpture park created by visionary welder Robert Dorris? Call it "Jurassic ambition." Then throw in two trips to Washington, D.C., to dispel any bit of Bronto doubt.

The Smithsonian Institute was all agog with "prehysteria" in 1914. Newspapers reported that professors had recently unearthed a monster skeleton of a "dinosaur," a prehistoric beast "as large as an ocean-liner" that apparently sank when it needed to swim. "The reason given for its disappearance is that the dinosaur was so large that Noah was forced to leave it out of the ark," reported *The Daily Reflector* of Jeffersonville, Indiana.

That same article indicated that Winsor McCay—the comic strip whiz behind *Little Nemo in Slumberland*—had selected the "dinosaur" as the subject of his newest hand-drawn film. McCay had experimented with animation for some time before realizing that audiences could not quite grasp the fact that a series of ink drawings created the illusion

of movement. To quell critics who suspected he used strings or mirrors, McCay produced *Gertie the Dinosaur* [right, top]—a cartoon that featured a character that the Smithsonian itself declared extinct.

Fast forward seventy-five years, when Robert Dorris, an aircraft engineer from Erie, Kansas, took a trip to the nation's capital. Dorris, too, yearned to do something that hadn't been done. And when he saw the dino skeletons on display at the Smithsonian, he knew what that something was: He returned home and began building life-size dinosaur sculptures in his backyard. Using scrap metal to shape his behemoths—springs, pistons, oil pans, and other parts salvaged from junked cars—he gave form to a folk art environment he called Dinosaur Not So National Park.

Dorris died in 2007, leaving behind his welded Ankylosaurus [right center], Tyrannosaurus Rex [right, bottom], and other large lizards [below] for posterity. In 2014, the city of Erie began moving twelve of the monsters to a new park on the edge of town, marking the start of a new age in local tourism drawn around very old lines.





# ZaSu Pitts Birthplace



Parsons, Kansas, bills itself as the “Purple Martin Capital.” Each spring, thousands of the iridescent swallows return from Brazil to fill the flat land with their sharp song. Perhaps that’s why locally born actress ZaSu Pitts so often seemed to possess hands determined to flutter away.

Pitts came into this world on January 3, 1894, suiting her parents, Rulandus and Nelly Shay Pitts, with an immediate predicament: Rulandus’ sisters—Eliza and Susan—each wished the new babe to be given her name. The compromise saw the infant christened “Eliza Susan” but nicknamed “ZaSu” for short—a sobriquet that the future actress would adopt as her screen name. Mary Pickford, who worked with Pitts in the early Aircraft Pictures feature *The Little Princess* (1917), predicted that fans would forever mangle ZaSu’s moniker, and so they did—even after Pitts herself recorded its pronunciation as “Say Zoo” in her combination autobiography and confectionery cookbook, *Candy Hits*.

Posterity remembers Pitts as a clown. Tradition says she discovered her knack for

getting laughs in 1911—after her family moved to Santa Cruz, California—and she was asked to recite “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere” in front of her high school class. The doleful damsel delivered a performance that garnered guffaws instead of applause—a tremulous declamation made more merrily miserable by her overwrought, fidgeting hands.

Pitts retained the mournful demeanor—and the nervous palm play—when she became a film comedienne. Between 1931 and 1933 she was even teamed with blonde funny girl Thelma Todd as a feminine counterpart to Laurel and Hardy. But oddly enough, before those days, she was described as “the world’s greatest tragedienne.” Austrian director Erich von Stroheim paid her that compliment after casting her in his silent masterpiece, *Greed*—an epic in which her character loses her mind, and several fingers, to the avarice that follows a lottery win. For that performance alone Pitts deserves the impressive exhibit afforded her at the Parsons Historical Museum [below] and the singular Star of Fame set in front of the Parsons Theater in 2000 [left, bottom] by a few handy fans.





# Cherryvale

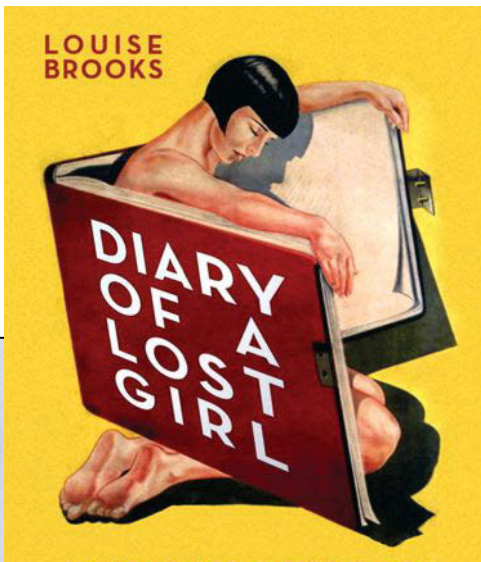
February 9, 1929, was the day the lid came off the world's silent cinema. An audience had assembled inside the Gloria-Palast in Berlin, eager to view G. W. Pabst's new feature film, *Die Büchse der Pandora*. Skeptics in attendance believed Pabst had grasped at glitter in the dark: In the lead role of Lulu, he'd cast an American girl—a Kansas dancer turned Hollywood vamp who'd traveled to Deutschland feeling bitter with Paramount Pictures. Doubt reigned as the lights winked out and the silver screen sank into blackness. Then the room swirled with images escaping from that frame—sexy, innocent, guilty, and provocative spirits—set free by a goddess crowned with bobbed black hair.

To this day, critics fumble over themselves snatching at words to describe the supernatural appeal of Louise Brooks. All agree that *Pandora's Box*—the English title of her debut film for Pabst—unleashed something wholly unique onto celluloid. Like the First

Woman of Greek mythology who opened a jar filled with unknown essences, Brooks seemed to possess a wealth of gifts she herself didn't fully understand. Her allure was a type of inadvertent inferno—a flame that unintentionally burned all it touched.

The fact that Brooks hailed from one of the heartland's small towns only deepened her mystique. She was born on November 14, 1906, in Cherryvale, Kansas, where—some historians claim—high school student Frank E. Bellamy had written the original twenty-three words of the “Pledge of Allegiance” sixteen years earlier. Brooks was the daughter of lawyer Leonard Porter and pianist Myra Rude Brooks. Her childhood playmates included Vivian Roberta Jones—who would one day adopt the stage name Vivian Vance and star as Ethel Mertz in the 1950s sitcom *I Love Lucy*. Around her, the railroad clacked with life—carrying zinc from the local smelter.

Railroads continue to define Cherryvale's personality. The Mission-style Atchison,







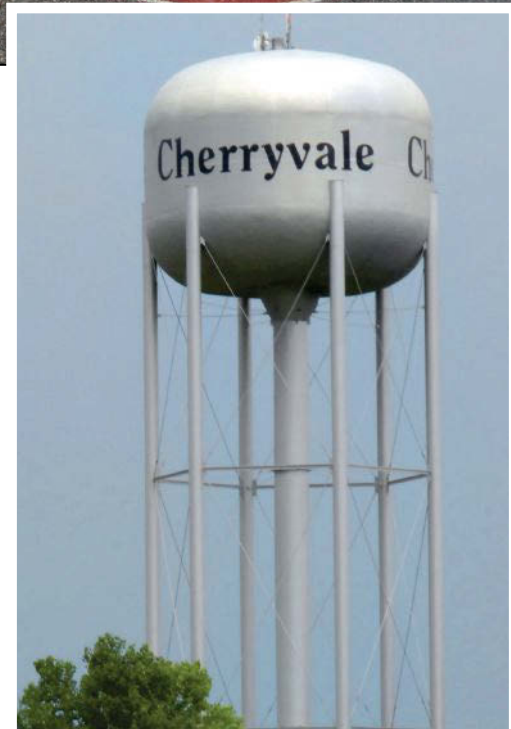
Topeka & Santa Fe Railway depot is the only one of its kind to survive on the old Southern Kansas Lines. The Leatherock Hotel—last of the nineteen local overnights that once welcomed train passengers—has advertised a Louise Brooks Art Deco Suite. Brooks' birthplace can be seen at 531 East 7th Street. Fans should not disturb the present occupants.

Brooks left Cherryvale in 1920—first to study dance at Wichita, Kansas, and then to become a member of the Denishawn Dance Company in New York. She was cast as a chorus girl in George White's *Scandals* and a feature player in the *Ziegfeld Follies* before she signed a five-year contract with Paramount. There she made *A Girl in Every Port* (1928), *Beggars of Life* (1928), and *The Canary Murder Case* (1929) before leaving for Germany and the expressionistic sets of director G. W. Pabst.



Brooks wasn't the first act to earn Cherryvale international attention. Not long after the city was platted in 1871—and named for the area's succulent fruit trees—an insatiable evil set up shop seven miles northeast of town. John Bender Sr. and his wife, Kate, established a deadly inn along the Osage Trail. Visitors stopping for respite often found eternal rest in the Benders' orchard after attending dinners at which they were brutally bludgeoned, dropped through a trap door into the cellar, and suited with slit throats to silence any last complaints. Three hammers later discovered in the Bender home are today displayed inside the Cherryvale Museum along with a blade believed to be the instrument used to administer the final Sweeney-Todd-style quietus.

Some of that darkness may have bled through in the final scenes of *Pandora's Box* where Lulu, forced into prostitution, commits the fatal error of selecting Jack the Ripper as her john. Brooks' next two films, *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929) and *Prix de Beauté* (1930), would see her characters put through similar dark paces while permitting only the faintest traces of light, but by that time, her immortality was achieved. Brooks was a force, fully realized, that once freely released could never truly be captured or comprehended.





Concluded from page 31

Indeed, so deeply is showmanship rooted in the region that the name “Hollywood” was actually carried west from here by Topeka, Kansas, resident Dacida Wilcox who, along with her husband, developed the parcel of California property that currently keeps the world entertained.

Scholars may someday find cause for the wealth of artistic inspiration in the land over which it was raised. Motorists who imagine the whole of the Midwest to be flat as a phonograph record will be delightfully surprised by any drive. The Dissected Till Plains of eastern Nebraska, northeastern Kansas, and northern Missouri gently rock the road with sweeping hills, crisscrossing streams, and fields of farmland sprouting green over yellow loess. Kansas City breaks the horizon on a bed of limestone, wrapped in the watery bow that is the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers. Continuing south, the country slips deeper into the expanses of the Osage Plains; vistas grow wide, but communities remain small: The quaint city of Parsons can look like a metropolis when the purple martins are in town.

**THE HUM AND THE HUSH:** [Below and inset] Roscoe Arbuckle's 1933 “comeback” short *Buzzin' Around* employed a swarm of animated bumblebees to comment on the cacophony that had overtaken the cinema with the coming of talking pictures. The twenty-minute film boasts one of only six recordings that preserve the sound of Arbuckle's voice for posterity.

Here is the country old-timers talk about—a wistful matinée ready for the big screen. One can hardly imagine a more appropriate character for a Silent Movie Route to display. Its biggest scenes are pretty as a picture. Its softest sequences are sublimely soundless.

In recent years, interest in the Midwest's contributions to early American cinema has continued to grow—and so has the consensus that the contribution was substantial. In 2013, evidence arose to suggest that the Plaza Cinema of Ottawa, Kansas, is the oldest operating movie house in the country—a screen gem that dates from 1905. Management has since established an on-site Movie Memorabilia Museum to celebrate film history. Meanwhile, the annual Kansas Silent Film Festival continues to bring fans to Topeka each year. Its programs have even returned Roscoe Arbuckle to Kansas with screenings of *He Did and He Didn't* (1916), *Coney Island* (1917), and *Leap Year* (1921).

The Prince of Whales would have appreciated the screen time. After the agony of his Hays Office-imposed exile, he strove for a comeback, shortly before his death at age 46 in 1933. He signed a contract with Warner Bros. and produced six two-reel comedies—one of which seems to reveal his feelings about the cacophony that drove him from the silent screen: In *Buzzin' Around* (1933), Roscoe plays a farm boy who motors to the city—and thus, out of his pastoral life and



into pandemonium. When he cranks up his jalopy, its clunks, clanks, and rumbles drown out the dialogue. And when a beehive drops into the back of his cab, he doesn't hear it for the surrounding hullabaloo. Inadvertently, he swallows one of the buzzing bugs, and thereafter finds that whenever he opens his mouth, he emits naught but a hollow drone. Soon, other characters are similarly afflicted—gulping down bees—until all talk is reduced to meaningless noise.

The road from Harold Lloyd's home in Burchard, Nebraska, to the Buster Keaton Museum in Piqua, Kansas, encourages the same pursuit of peacefulness—albeit without the zings and stings. It asks drivers to zip their lips to hear its history, then takes their breath away by rolling out the scenery. Images that flash past speak volumes with light and shadow. Get yourself a seat in the front row, and drive until the lights dim. Then listen with your eyes. And hush. ♥

THOMAS ARTHUR REPP is the Executive Editor of AMERICAN ROAD.

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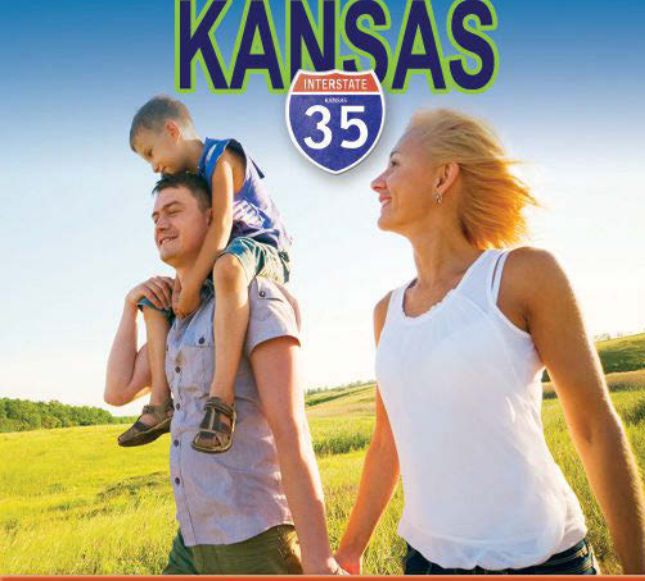
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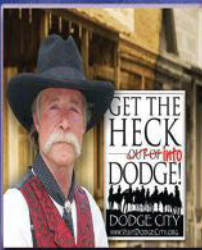
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## "Sheer Will"

For someone who found his first fame as a movie star during the silent years of early Hollywood, cowboy humorist Will Rogers certainly had a lot to say.

In person or in print, his voice was unmistakable—an affable, down-home drawl that easily ensnared any object toward which it was aimed, not unlike the lasso he expertly wielded whenever he performed rope tricks on stage. In the national newspapers—in a weekly column aptly titled "Slipping the Lariat Over"—Rogers agile wit encircled and examined the fads and foibles of his day in a manner that pulled sense from the circus. On the vaudeville circuit, his lariat act left every eye hogtied.



Indeed, so skilled was Rogers at holding an audience with a slipknot that the loop became the focus of one of his earlier motion pictures. *The Ropin' Fool* was produced by the Hal Roach

Studios after Rogers had learned the movie-making ropes starring in features such as *Jubilo* and *Cupid the Cowpuncher*. The short subject employed slow motion to show good ol' Will twirling and tossing his lariat around a horse and rider every which way one could—with Texas two-skips, four-foot rollbacks, and finely executed figure eights.

Rogers himself whirled his way into this world on November 4, 1879. He was born in what is today the state of Oklahoma, outside the tiny town of Oologah, but the nearby city of Claremore was destined to claim him as its own. Eventually, the highway that ran through the community would even carry Rogers' name: In 1952, long after celebrity had crowned their native son, sentimental souls of the US Highway 66 Association christened their road the Will Rogers Highway.

By that time, Rogers had been dead for seventeen years—the victim of a plane crash that occurred in an icy lagoon half a world away—and his body had found its final resting place in Claremore, on land he'd purchased in 1911 with plans to fashion a retirement home. Today that property houses the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, a premier showplace that spins its own yarns about the one-of-a-kind entertainer.



**A WILL AND A WAY:** Will Rogers got his big break when he was cast in *The Ziegfeld Follies* cabaret produced by Broadway showman Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. He could twirl two lariats at a time and spin a sixty-foot circle he called the "Big Crinoline."



**US HIGHWAY 66** traveled from Chicago to California via Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The route was decommissioned in 1985.

## Have Rope, Will Travel

"The movies," Will Rogers wrote, "are the only business where you can go out front and applaud yourself." Visitors to the Will Rogers Memorial Museum may recall that clever observation as they approach the limestone building and encounter a bas-relief sculpture of the wry cowboy waiting at its entrance. The charming carving depicts Rogers sitting on a film set, relaxing in a director's chair between takes, and waiting for the show to begin.

The image is the first of many the museum uses to trace Rogers' rise from disenchanting ranch hand to reigning king of 20th Century Fox. He began his performing career in 1899, touring state fairs after winning a steer-roping contest, and for the next three and a half decades, he embodied the American cowboy on the international stage. He traveled through South Africa with Texas Jack's West Show & Circus; toured vaudeville with his trained pony, Teddy; and hit the big time in 1916, when he appeared on Broadway in his first of six *Ziegfeld Follies*, playing the part of a displaced westerner confronting the East. "I can remember when I was two years old...chasing and roping my mother's turkeys out on the ranch," he'd tell reporters as he twirled his lariat and awaited his next cue. "And I could catch 'em, too."







The Will Rogers Memorial Museum pays homage to the *Follies* in a display that contains a period photograph of Rogers wrapping his lariat around pretty chorines; a silver service set gifted to Rogers by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.; and a saddle Rogers kept at his ranch so Ziegfeld's daughter could ride her pony. A colorful wall mural pays homage to Rogers' roping routines and depicts the trouper performing under a ZIEGFELD marquee. Lariats are displayed throughout the museum—props that permitted Rogers to evolve from cowboy comic to country philosopher. Sources agree that Rogers began adding commentary about current events to his act shortly after joining the *Ziegfeld Follies* and noticing that most members of his audience were customers who attended the show several times each week. To keep them laughing, he needed fresh material every night, and he so began to scour the newspapers for inspiration each day.

“W. C. Fields performed at the Follies with Will Rogers for six years,” says museum representative Andy Hogan, “and he once remarked that he never heard Will do the same monologue two nights in a row.”

Although the Will Rogers Memorial Museum can't restage the *Ziegfeld Follies*, it can invite visitors to assess Rogers' film performances inside its Will Rogers Theatre. Those who pause to view a feature film inside the cozy cinema will discover that, when Rogers wrangled his way into motion pictures, Hollywood bid him bring along his homey persona. In nearly all his movies, Rogers played a version of himself. Even in his silent feature *The Headless Horseman* (1922)—a film adaptation of Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*—and the Mark-Twain-inspired talkie *A Connecticut Yankee* (1931), Rogers revealed a little more Will than one might expect: His Ichabod Crane exhibits trick-riding talent remarkable for a schoolteacher—and his Arthurian time-traveler's turns with a lasso are suspiciously slick for a character who ostensibly hails from the Constitution State.



**WILL AND GRACE:** Works of art around the Will Rogers Memorial Museum include the bas relief *Will Rogers* [top, left] by Philip Varkin; the bronze *Riding Into the Sunset* [top] by Electra Waggoner Biggs; and the *Will Rogers Mural* [above] by Ray Piercy, which depicts the cowboy trick-riding.

### Headliner with Horse Sense

During the winter of 1922, Rogers appeared in a burlesque segment he'd written for the *Ziegfeld Frolic* cabaret: “The Disagreement Conference” lampooned the recent Washington Conference to curtail the naval arms race and took political pokes at the administration of President Warren G. Harding. The skit became the hit of the show—earning such praise that a representative from the White House attended a performance to request Rogers limit his jokes about the president's golf game. Rogers acquiesced, even as he continued to sharpen his civil wit. By the end of the year, he was writing a weekly newspaper column for the newly formed McNaught Syndicate.



**WILL POWER:** [Above] *Doctor Bull* was one of Rogers' best movies—a 1933 feature helmed by director John Ford that told the story of a small-town physician who faces a typhoid epidemic. This image is displayed inside the Will Rogers Theatre.



Many snippets of Rogers' writing are displayed throughout the museum, but the most intimate place to read them is in the re-creation of a study that Rogers maintained at his ranch in Pacific Palisades, California. Adorned with black-and-white photographs that showcase highlights from his life, the wood-paneled study was designed for a man who spends his time thinking. The focus of the room is Rogers' desk, complete with a typewriter and crumpled sheets of paper. Nearby is a bed outfitted with blankets decorated with American Indian designs. Above the bed hangs a guitar, and wedged between the desk and the bed is a globe. The room is comfortable and relaxing, and offers a glimpse in the way Rogers coaxed his thoughts onto paper.

Beginning in 1919, Rogers took sabbaticals from Broadway—first to make films for Samuel Goldwyn and then to star in his own series of two-reel comedies for the Hal Roach Studios. But in 1925, he left the *Ziegfeld Follies* for good to lecture his way across the US and perform onstage in London. Not long afterward, he set up house in Hollywood. Between 1929 and 1935, he completed an astounding twenty-nine films for the Fox Pictures Corporation, working at such a dedicated pace that he left two features—*Steamboat Round the Bend* and *In Old Kentucky*—finished and unreleased at the time of his tragic death at Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15, 1935.

One corner of the museum tells the untimely tale. A wall of yellowed newspapers

bear headlines that blare CRASH KILLS WILL ROGERS—SECOND-HAND PLANE WAS LOST IN FOG. Rogers was traveling with his friend—aviator Wiley Post—and searching for material for his newspaper column in the Alaska Territory when the plane crashed during a routine takeoff and killed both men.



The tragedy traumatized the nation—as a collection of telegrams sent to Rogers' widow attests. Those on display at the museum include condolences sent by Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Waldorf and Nancy Astor, and Groucho and Ruth Marx. Below the heartbroken messages stands a scale model of the doomed airplane—a hybrid craft that Post had pieced together with parts salvaged from a Lockheed Orion and Explorer. Rogers called the improvised flying machine *Aurora Borealis*—believing it to be a star that could sail among the constellations.

Rogers' fatal fall from the sky added a touch of the mythic to the figure of a man already larger than life. Small wonder that the Will Rogers Memorial Museum frequently portrays its namesake as a giant. In oils and acrylics—in ink on film posters and bronze on the colossal statue that towers inside its rotunda—likenesses of the cowboy humorist wear immense expressions. These are the honest smiles and amused smirks of a man who truly loved life even as he recognized the plain truth that “Being a hero is about the shortest-lived profession on earth.”

Rogers was a national icon when he died at age fifty-five. And he continues to command that title, after death, in that space on the American landscape where only legends can go. Visitors can see that space, gazing over Claremore, as they stand in the presence of the Rogers family tomb. Ahead looms a statue of Rogers, riding his favorite horse, Soapsuds, into a literal and literary sunset. Behind, back inside the museum, *The Ropin' Fool* continues to play in a never-ending loop with Rogers spinning a lariat as wide as the sun. Both images easily capture the imagination. And rightly so. Rogers could hold the world with a rope, a wink, or a word. ♥



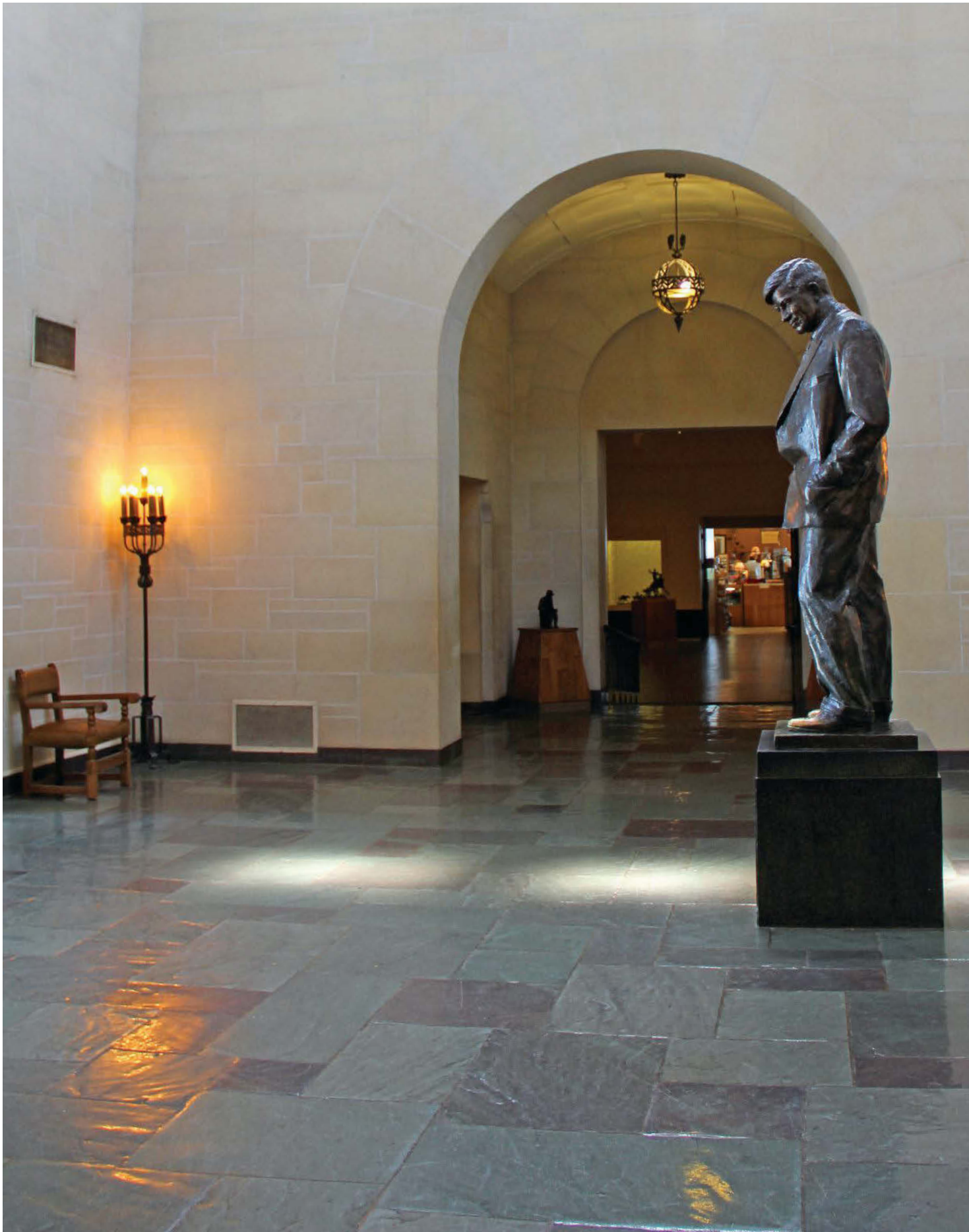
**WILL AND TESTAMENT:** [Above] A re-creation of Rogers' Pacific Palisades study allows visitors to envision the country philosopher composing his newspaper columns. [Right and below, right] A scale model of Wiley Post's doomed airplane and a telegram sent by Laurel and Hardy offer insight into Rogers' untimely death. [Below] Rogers' features appear, like that of a friendly ghost, etched onto a museum window.



Will Rogers Memorial Museum • 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd • Claremore, Oklahoma 74017 • (800) 324-9455 • willrogers.com

**POP AMHEARST** is a Roadside Contributor to **AMERICAN ROAD**. Will Rogers portrait and museum exterior photo courtesy Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore, Oklahoma. Additional photos by Jimmy J. Pack Jr.







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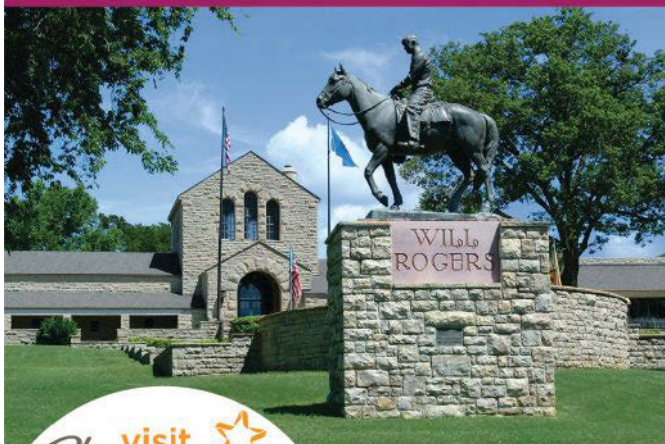


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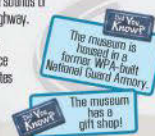
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*Silent*

# STAR

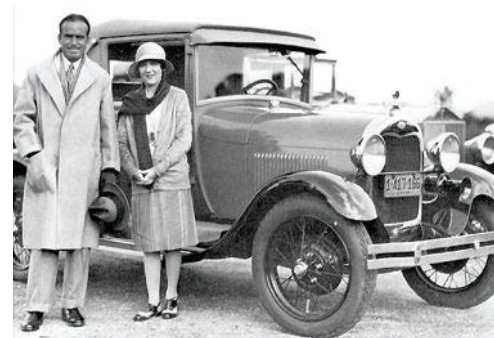
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# CARS





# 1929 ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM 1 DERBY TOURER

Owls Head Transportation Museum

117 Museum Street • Owls Head, Maine 04854 • (207) 594-4418 • owlshead.org

In late February of 1927, smitten film critics across the country reached an enraptured consensus: Clara Bow, all agreed, was an actress going places.

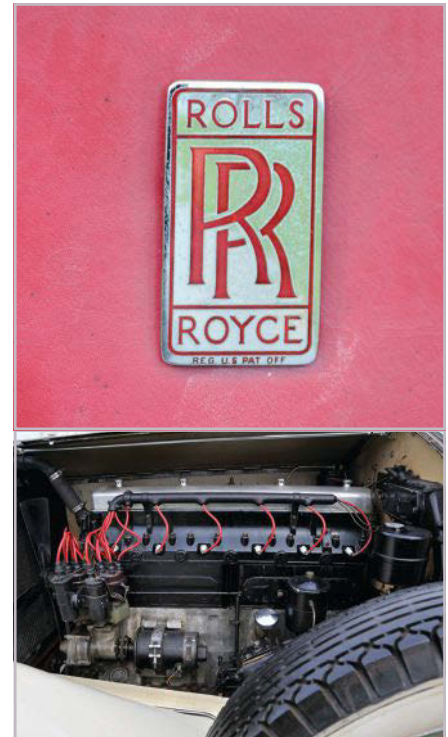
The girl with the peppy personality, sultry pout, and head of red hair so untamable it seemed almost to singe every celluloid frame was appearing in *It*—a romantic comedy about a department store salesgirl imbued with a sexy, irresistible spark—and audiences everywhere were succumbing to her spell. No one—on-screen or off—could fully explain what “it” was. But the critics knew they liked “it.” They knew Bow had “it.” And they knew “it” was good for the long haul.

Modern-day fans can still feel the pull of Bow’s timeless appeal—especially those who pay a visit to the Owls Head Transportation Museum in the great state of Maine. There, as they walk the floor admiring row upon row of sassy chassis, patrons find their eyes drawn to one particular vehicle—a Rolls-Royce Phantom 1 Derby Tourer built in 1929.

With its cream-colored exterior and lush, quilted red leather interior, the classy convertible evokes a sweetheart bouquet—and, indeed, the car has often been called a “valentine on wheels.” And that’s because this fine ride was once owned and operated by Clara Bow herself. For fifteen years, she used it to tool around Hollywood, filling Tinseltown streets with the same shining aura that she drove across the silver screen.

The chassis of the Bow Rolls-Royce was fashioned in Springfield, Massachusetts, following World War I—when American investors obtained the license to build Rolls-Royce vehicles in the US. Those automobiles—known as “Springfield Rolls-Royces”—were manufactured for approximately a decade. Production ceased in 1931 when demand for luxury cars dropped during the Great Depression.

Delivery of the Springfield-built Rolls-Royce Phantom began in 1927. The Springfield plant built approximately





"The It Girl" • 1905–1965  
*Mantrap* (1926) • *It* (1927) • *Wings* (1927) • *Hula* (1927)

twenty Derby Tourers—the model of the Bow car—in 1929. The body of the Bow Car was assembled by Brewster of Long Island City, New York—a specialized company contracted to build chassis for US-made Rolls-Royces—and included such details as mahogany running boards and pie-wedge-shaped doors. It bears Springfield chassis number S-293KR and Brewster Body number 5606, and carried a factory price of \$17,840 during a time when a Ford Model A touring car cost around \$550.



#### VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS #: S-293KR / BODY #: 5606  
 ENGINE: 40/65 hp, cast-iron straight-6  
 DISPLACEMENT: 467.9 cu. in.  
 BORE: 4.3 in.  
 STROKE: 5.5 in.  
 MANUFACTURER: Rolls-Royce Ltd.  
 PRODUCTION: 2,269  
 Built at Springfield, Massachusetts,  
 and Long Island City, New York  
 PURCHASE PRICE: \$17,840

Clara Bow took delivery of her Rolls-Royce in Beverly Hills on December 15, 1930. At the time, she was twenty-four years old. Bow's affinity for fast cars was well documented, and she was known to disappear from the glitz of Hollywood in search of open road. She reportedly once said, "I can't get a car that will drive fast enough."

Bow's life began in Brooklyn in 1905. Born into a family that struggled with the dueling demons of financial hardship and domestic violence, the starlet of silent film was discovered after winning a beauty contest. She gained global fame for her ability to express herself on-screen—and an unusual effervescence best explored in her silent feature *It*. The film was based on a novelette by romance author Elinor Glyn, who later claimed that only four individuals in Hollywood genuinely possessed "it"—Clara Bow, leading man Antonio Moreno, the doorman at the Ambassador Hotel, and Rex the Wonder Horse.

"I was awfully confused about the horse," Bow later cracked, "but if she thought he had 'it,' then I figured he must be quite an animal."

Bow's roles—and her personal affairs—often landed her in precarious situations. Known for her candor and willingness to discuss her troubled past, she was successful on-screen, but not always popular with her Hollywood peers. Rumors circulated about her affairs with men and insatiable attraction to USC football players. With her heart-shaped face, hourglass figure, and thick hair that was dyed a feisty shade of auburn, the uninhibited Bow was largely regarded as a freewheeling figurehead of the flapper era.



**NOW YOU SEE IT:** Asked to explain what "it" was, Clara Bow once replied, "I ain't real sure." But she did describe the sense of freedom that the 1920s personified. "I used to whiz down Sunset Boulevard in my [car], with several red Chow dogs to match my hair. Today, [actors are] sensible and end up with better health. But we had more fun."

She quit acting in 1933, expressing distaste for "talkies." Bow and her husband, actor Rex Bell, kept the iconic Rolls-Royce through World War II, then gave the vehicle to their family physician. In 1951 cotton machine dealer P. M. Ingram of Coalinga, California, reportedly traded his Model J Duesenberg for the Bow car. Nine years later, Ingram sold the Rolls to another Californian, Alton Walker, who in 1950 was the first chairman of the now-famed Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Former IBM president Tom Watson Jr. acquired the car sometime after 1973. He gifted the vintage Phantom to the Owls Head Transportation Museum in 1986.

Under the direction of Ground Vehicle Conservator Warren Kincaid, each vehicle in the museum's collection is receiving an assessment. On the sunny afternoon of April 10, 2013, Kincaid delighted staff and volunteers by running the Bow car on the grounds of the museum. Though it had not been driven in two decades, the vehicle was an instant star. Onlookers appreciated its fast flash and class—and certainly knew it when they saw it.

—JILLIAN GURNEY



# 1919 McFARLAN TYPE 125

Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum

212 Wedgewood Drive • Fairbanks, Alaska 99701 • (907) 450-2100 • fountainheadmuseum.com

**T**he life and death of silent movie idol Wallace Reid reads like a hard lesson etched into asphalt: *Those who spend their days racing through the fast lane will sooner or later run out of road.*

Movie moguls never could talk Reid into slowing down. They'd send chauffeurs to his home to bring him to the studio; he'd slip behind the wheel of his own car anyway and race to the set, pedal to the metal, world whirling past at a clip much faster than twenty-four frames per second.

"I love to speed," Reid once said of his addiction to adrenaline—and Hollywood saw two sides to the story. Tinseltown reporter Adela Rogers St. John celebrated the excitement Reid embodied, calling him "the finest driver I have ever ridden with." But gossip columnist Louella Parsons perceived wreckage waiting to happen. "Wallace Reid," she wrote, "drove the streets of Hollywood as if he were on the last lap of the chariot race in *Ben Hur*."

Skills and thrills...both were on display any time Reid took a drive, and both were amply packaged into his 1919 McFarlan Type 125. The daredevil actor purchased the prestigious vehicle at the height of his fast and furious career, drawn to a brand that was increasingly considered to be the "American Rolls-Royce." Sweeping size, exquisite elegance, and costly extras defined the McFarlan style. For the price of an average home, discriminating drivers could order a model custom-built to satisfy their most extravagant tastes. One well-heeled buyer requested that the car she ordered be upholstered in blue material that matched her favorite dress. Another asked that her two-passenger roadster be equipped with a special cushion for the comfort of her pampered canine. Reid required fancy bumpers, a tonneau windshield, and disc wheels with sterling silver insets to call his dream machine complete.

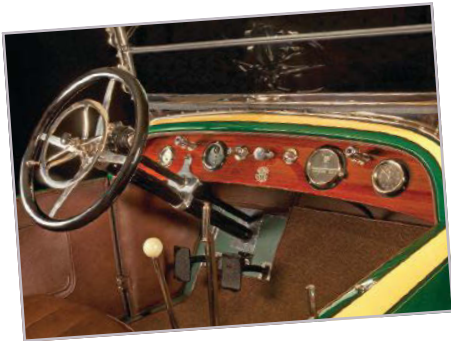
Reid's Type 125 was expertly assembled at Connersville, Indiana, inside a factory that





"The Screen's Most Perfect Lover" • 1891–1923  
*The Roaring Road* (1919) • *Double Speed* (1920) • *Excuse My Dust* (1920)

English immigrant John B. McFarlan had founded in 1856 as a buggy manufacturing works. In 1909, when the company began building automobiles, it kept its focus on horsepower: McFarlan made only six-cylinder vehicles. Models were initially built with a variety of engines—including Buda, Wainwright, Brownell, Continental, and Wisconsin. By 1914, the company switched to the larger, six-cylinder monster made by Teetor-Hartley—a massive motor that was the mightiest of its day.



## VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS #: 19133

ENGINE: 90 hp, six-cylinder Teetor-McFarlan T-head

DISPLACEMENT: 572.6 cu. in.  
 BORE: 4.5 in.  
 STROKE: 6 in.

MANUFACTURER: McFarlan Motor Corp.  
 PRODUCTION: 1913  
 Built at Connersville, Indiana

FACTORY PRICE: \$4,500

Wallace Reid was aware of the numbers. Before entering show business, he'd written for *The Motor* magazine, tinkered with engines, test-driven vehicles, and developed an obsession with auto racing. After he became a matinee idol, Reid made his motor mania a signature part of his screen persona. In films such as *The Roaring Road* (1919), *Excuse My Dust* (1920), and *Too Much Speed* (1921), he played race car drivers out to set the road and the world on fire. Women loved his dashing good looks and dubbed him "The Screen's Most Perfect Lover." Men admired his derring-do and respected the fact that he performed his own stunts.

Yet even as he developed the racing film as a genre, Reid began to lose control on the road and in his life. In 1915, there were whispers about a collision—a deadly crackup caused by Reid—that killed a man and injured a family on the Pacific Coast Highway. Those in the know said that director D. W. Griffith had bailed the reckless actor out of jail. Then—on March 2, 1919—Reid's life became a genuine train wreck. While traveling to film *The Valley of the Giants* in California's Humboldt County, he was nearly killed when the narrow-gauge logging locomotive he was riding tumbled off a trestle. Reid suffered a savage gash at the base of his scalp and a deep slash on his left arm that cut to the bone. He might have paused, convalesced, and considered the price he was paying for all the rush, but the studio doctor stitched him up, injected him with morphine, and pushed him back onto the set so production wouldn't miss a minute.



**SPEED REID:** Dapper movie star and road racer Wallace Reid measured his life in miles per hour. "Whether speeding down an open road or through the air," he said, "I feel a surge of blood through [my] veins that prompts [me] to ever increasing speeds." But the accelerated pace of filmmaking eventually led to his early demise.

Thus began Reid's journey on the road to ruin. Addiction seized him, abetted by an industry determined to keep cameras rolling at any cost. As his use of morphine increased, his body broke down and his mind crashed, sliding into a numbing dead end. By the time he made his last film in 1922, Reid could hardly stand up. He checked into a sanitarium, vowing to steer his way back from the brink—and to his great credit, he achieved sobriety. But the stress was too much; the ride was over. Reid died on January 18, 1923, at age 31.

After Reid's death, his widow, Dorothy Davenport, produced the film *Human Wreckage* (1923) to show the world the dangers of drug addiction. The public decried the immorality of the Hollywood industry. Only Reid's 1919 McFarlan escaped the scandal unscathed. The car eventually found its way to the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum of Fairbanks, Alaska, where it remains on display—one of only nineteen McFarlans known to still exist, the sole-surviving Type 125, and a singular ride that proves by its rarity that few who pursue speed will succeed in the long run.

—KARRAS STRASBURG



# 1928 FORD MODEL A SPORT COUPE

National Automobile Museum

10 South Lake Street • Reno, Nevada 89501 • (775) 333-9300 • [automuseum.org](http://automuseum.org)

In many ways, Hollywood looks a lot like Christmas. Big sales and bright lights spell success, and a person with a good eye can spy a star on every street corner.

The tale of the humble Ford Model A that today rests inside the National Automobile Museum of Reno, Nevada, began on a late December evening long ago. Beverly Hills was readying to ring in the new year 1928—silk stockings had been hung by the chimney with care—when silent screen hero Douglas Fairbanks decided to purchase a holiday gift for his real-life wife, Mary Pickford. Fairbanks hoped to lighten her holiday with a new automobile—greener than mistletoe, shinier than the bulb in Rudolph's nose.

It was going to be a bright Christmas.

Not that the outlook could get much brighter for Mary Pickford. As surely as she was Fairbanks' spouse, she was "America's Sweetheart"—a sobriquet bestowed by an adoring public enamored with her every move. And Pickford knew the value of a name:

Born in 1892 in Toronto, Ontario, she'd been saddled with the moniker "Gladys Louise Smith" as a baby. Her father died when she was five, and she'd been pressed into performing on the stage as an adolescent, touring tirelessly with third-rate theatrical troupes and living a life she could only call desperate. Then she received her big showbiz break in 1907 when she was cast in the Broadway play *The Warrens of Virginia* and producer David Belasco insisted she change her name for the stage. She became "Mary Pickford" by plucking prominent names from her mother's family tree, creating a title that would electrify marquees like a string of Christmas lights.

Success followed, and in 1909 she was hired by D. W. Griffith, pioneer film director of the Biograph Company. During the next year, she appeared in an astonishing fifty-one movies, and when Biograph headed for California in 1910, Pickford went with the company. Soon every cinema patron in the nation knew her name, and she was enjoying



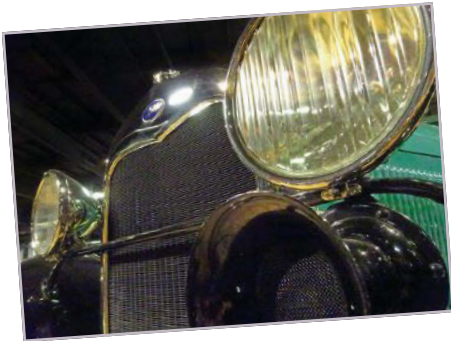


"America's Sweetheart" • 1892–1979

*The Poor Little Rich Girl* (1917) • *Heart o' the Hills* (1919) • *Sparrows* (1926)

the singular fame that prompted director Cecil B. DeMille to proclaim, "There have been hundreds of stars.... There has been only one Mary Pickford."

She met Douglas Fairbanks in 1915. They married in 1920, and for the next decade, they reigned as Hollywood royalty. And that's where the 1928 Ford Model A enters the picture. In 1927, Pickford requested a new car for Christmas—even as motor magnate Henry Ford was introducing a new automobile to the world.



## VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

SERIAL #: A1154

ENGINE: 40 hp, four-cylinder

DISPLACEMENT: 200.5 cu in.  
BORE: 3.875 in.  
STROKE: 4.25 in.

MANUFACTURER: Ford Motor Co.  
PRODUCTION: 79,831  
Built at Detroit, Michigan

PURCHASE PRICE: \$550

That motorcar was the Ford Model A—a four-cylinder vehicle designed to reinvigorate slumping sales caused by the falling popularity of the Model T. With a stylish body designed by Ford's son, Edsel, it was the first car equipped with standard driver controls and windshield safety glass. It cost a modest \$550—a price destined to make it a star in its own right.

Fairbanks thought to purchase one of the sporty new coupes for his beloved. But obtaining one of the cars was not easily accomplished. Although cowboy comedian Will Rogers had taken delivery of the first Model A Ford to be manufactured—a gift sent to his doorstep by Henry Ford himself—and Thomas Edison's complementary Tudor Sedan was under construction—the Model As had not yet officially hit the market. After some finagling, Fairbanks succeeded in arranging delivery of a green Sport Coupe on Christmas Eve—an act that the *Los Angeles Times* heralded with the December 26, 1927, headline "Doug Picks Ford For Pickford."

The car was delivered by local Ford dealer J. Benjamin Fahy. The gift was a hit—and a valuable publicity prop. Pickford and Fairbanks were both photographed with it, and much was made of its status as the first Ford Model A purchased. Eventually, however, the fun ride came to an end. Pickford and Fairbanks divorced in 1936, and the car was eventually traded in to the Hillcrest Motor Company on Hollywood Boulevard. And that's where it was sold to adoring Pickford fan T. F. Hartness, who took it to the tiny hamlet of Jane, Missouri.



**MARY CHRISTMAS:** Mary Pickford received her 1928 Model A Ford as a 1927 holiday gift from her husband, Douglas Fairbanks, who used his star power to acquire it. "Santa said the Ford company could not deliver any cars until May," the *Los Angeles Times* reported. "So [Fairbanks] sent a wire to his friend Edsel and presto! the car came forth."

Hartness yearned to preserve the car for future generations. In 1965, he wrote a letter to William F. Harrah, renowned Nevada gaming pioneer and car collector—and offered to sell him a piece of history. "It appealed to me that you would take pride in showing it off to your Hollywood friends," Hartness imparted. "You know there was only one Mary Pickford and one Mr. Henry Ford. There was never a car that was known by so many people."

Shortly thereafter, the Model A that had been given as a yuletide gift to America's Sweetheart was parked permanently in the Biggest Little City in the World. Today it shines proudly as part of the Harrah Collection at the National Automobile Museum in Reno, alongside 1,400 other vintage rides that tell more stories about the rich, the famous, and the best in Fords and fenders.

As for Mary Pickford, mortality caught up with the immortal screen star on May 29, 1979, and she was laid to rest in Glendale, California, leaving behind a name that will always sound like it was made to grace a marquee and the memory of one star that shone brightest among many.

—POP AMHEARST



# 1923 AVIONS VOISIN C-5 SPORTING VICTORIA

Nethercutt Museum

15151 Bledsoe Street • Sylmar, California 91342 • (818) 364-6464 • [nethercuttcollection.org](http://nethercuttcollection.org)

If your given name is Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguolla, you're clearly destined to drive a fancy car. If you then simplify that name to "Rudolph Valentino," congratulations! You're going to become the first great male sex symbol in the age of the celebrity cult—and you'll own not just one, but three 1923 French Avions Voisins.

You know, one for Hollywood and two more for Paris.

It may be difficult for us to grasp the impact of Valentino's fame in the 1920s, as it's been drowned out by the shrieks for so many idols since: Frank Sinatra, James Dean, Elvis, Michael Jackson, Justin Bieber. But Valentino was the one who started it all. Although he died from complications of an emergency appendectomy at the age of thirty-one with a hundred thousand inconsolable women wailing in the street outside his window, car lovers can still experience a dash of Valentino's

dash—not to mention his dashboard—by visiting his "Hollywood" Voisin at the Nethercutt Museum in Sylmar, California.

The C-5 Sporting Victoria was one of three Voisins purchased by Valentino on a trip to Europe in 1923, and the only one he brought back to Hollywood. The vehicle was the brainchild of French aircraft designer and manufacturer Gabriel Voisin, a pioneer in early European aviation who turned to automobiles after the "trauma" of seeing planes designed by him and his brother Charles used by the French military in World War I. Unusually, Voisin designed both the C-5's chassis and its engine—a four-liter sleeve valve with aluminum pistons that generated a generous 90 horsepower and a top speed of 80 MPH. The custom body, manufactured in Paris by J. Rothschild et Fils, was fitted with a unique convertible top with three positions allowing for varied driving experiences to suit Valentino's mood, from free-spirited, open-air touring car to formal, enclosed limousine.





# RUDOLPH VALENTINO

"The Sheik" • 1895–1926

*The Sheik* (1921) • *Blood and Sand* (1922) • *The Eagle* (1925)

The car's original hood ornament, a stylized art deco bird sculpture, was replaced by a silver-plated coiled and hooded cobra with bloodied fangs—a gift given to Valentino by his friends Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford in honor of his 1925 film *Cobra*.

The car reflects Valentino's screen image to a T: sleek, stylish, and unabashedly European. Yet with its removable trunk and dual spare tires, it also suggests a hint of the hands-on practicality of the Italian immigrant who loved to work on his own cars.



## VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS #: 2608 / ENGINE #: 2009

ENGINE: 90 hp, four-cylinder

DISPLACEMENT: 242 cu in.  
BORE: 3.74 in.  
STROKE: 5.51 in.

MANUFACTURER: Avions Voisin  
PRODUCTION: 500  
Built at Paris, France

PURCHASE PRICE: \$14,000

Valentino was born in Castellaneta, Italy, on May 6, 1895. His father was a retired captain in the Royal Italian Cavalry, his mother a Frenchwoman. Rodolfo, never a great student, received a degree in landscape gardening, but was unable to find employment in his native land. After arriving in the US at Ellis Island in 1913, he became a "taxi dancer"—a ballroom partner for hire—at Maxim's supper club in Manhattan. His dancing talent later paid off when he landed his first big Hollywood role as a Argentine libertine in 1921's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, suavely spinning and dipping his way through a steamy tango sequence with Beatrice Dominguez.

Later that year, Valentino secured his hold on female America's throbbing heart with his iconic performance in the title role of *The Sheik*, which reportedly caused women in cinemas across America to faint. The "Latin Lover" had arrived, and the collective swoon of the nation's youth had begun. As Bette Davis once put it, "A whole generation of females wanted to ride off into a sandy paradise with him."

The husbands and boyfriends of said females, accustomed to viewing movies that glorified the all-American machismo of the rough-and-tumble Tom Mix variety, were less enthusiastic about Valentino's different brand of sex appeal. The press excoriated Valentino's "dandyish" style, to the point of questioning his masculinity and, by innuendo, his sexuality. Rudy, who was twice married (in fact, he was charged with bigamy because he married his second spouse before



**CHIC SHEIK:** Although Rudolph Valentino lived in Beverly Hills, he kept his Avions Voisin in Benedict Canyon at a mansion he purchased in 1925. The property was equipped with stables for his four Arabian-strain horses, a garage for his beautiful automobiles, and a gas tank so he would not have to fuel up in public.

he'd been divorced from his first wife for a full year), took exception, and even challenged a Chicago journalist who had flat-out blamed him for the American male's "degeneration into effeminacy" to a boxing match. The anonymous journalist didn't reply, but boxing writer Frank O'Neill accepted the challenge in his place. Thanks to some training from heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey, Valentino knocked down the chastened scribe on the roof of the Ambassador Hotel in New York—but failed to KO the rumors about his sexuality.

That aside, Valentino seemingly had it all: looks, charm, style, women, and fast cars. (Maybe too fast. Vanity prevented him from wearing the glasses he sorely needed and he had many an accident, once wrapping a car around a light pole and ejecting himself and two passengers some twenty-five feet, yet somehow avoiding injury!) The refined, exotic sophistication of Valentino may have given way to—well, to Justin Bieber. But a whiff of Valentino's style lives on at the Nethercutt Museum.

Ladies, be sure to bring the smelling salts.

—JESS WINFIELD





# 1930 CADILLAC MODEL 452A TOWN CABRIOLET

Nethercutt Museum

15151 Bledsoe Street • Sylmar, California 91342 • (818) 364-6464 • [nethercuttcollection.org](http://nethercuttcollection.org)

**E**pic director Cecil B. DeMille liked his cars the way he made his movies: sweeping and spectacular, on a biblical scale.

If the man who twice directed *The Ten Commandments* embraced any stony edict of his own, that precept was surely “It Shall Be Big.” To DeMille, slick production was sacred, and a small budget was blasphemy. On-screen or in the street, a good vehicle had room to accommodate Cleopatra, Pontius Pilate, and, perhaps, John the Baptist. A great ride took its audience to Alexandria, Rome, or Galilee in eight reels or on one tank of gas.

DeMille owned many automobiles throughout his life, but the machine that best embodied his monumental mien was his 1930 Cadillac Model 452A Town Cabriolet. With its 148-inch wheelbase and overhead valve V16 engine, the car had the heft and horsepower to haul Moses across the Red Sea. Today, it's parked inside California's Nethercutt Museum, and it still looks a lot like a miracle.

The Cadillac Motor Car Company knew it was onto something tremendous when it introduced its new sixteen-cylinder models in early January of 1930. Italian automobile designer Ettore Bugatti had previously engineered a sixteen-cylinder, water-cooled, in-line U-engine to propel aircraft, but Cadillac's V-16 was the first of its kind built to power a car. Two cars equipped with the mean motors made their debut at the 30th Annual Automobile Show of New York—displayed at the General Motors salon at the Hotel Astoria—and left onlookers goggle-eyed. Cadillac officials called their creation “the finest example of design and precision” achieved since Eve ate the apple. Newspaper reporters marveled at the “almost magical smoothness” of its heavenly ride.

“You’ve never seen such a motor,” advertisements promised the public, driving home the hot temptation to buy.

Cecil B. DeMille was among the first customers to order one of the big beauties. At





"C. B." • 1881–1959

*The Ten Commandments* (1923) • *The King of Kings* (1927)

the time, he was working at MGM and gearing up to direct *Madam Satan*—a bizarre musical comedy about a midnight masquerade party held inside an airborne dirigible. The odd assignment may even have influenced DeMille's choice of custom finishes: Of the many models of V-16 available, he selected one of the priciest—the 452A "Madam X"-styled Town Cabriolet—with twin side mounts, a leather roof, and a collapsible top over the chauffeur's compartment. Only nine of the monsters would be manufactured.



## VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS #: 702029

ENGINE: 185 hp, sixteen-cylinder

DISPLACEMENT: 452 cu in.  
BORE: 3 in.  
STROKE: 4 in.

MANUFACTURER: Cadillac Motor Car Co.  
PRODUCTION: 6  
Built at Detroit, Michigan

PURCHASE PRICE: \$8,750

Of course, the flamboyant director had long before learned that the devil was in the details. DeMille was born in Ashfield, Massachusetts, on August 12, 1881. His father was a college professor and a lay minister who abandoned the straight-and-narrow to follow the dramatic path of a playwright. DeMille grew up admiring stagecraft. He tried his hand at acting, and in 1913 joined fellow thespian Jesse L. Lasky in forming a company to produce motion picture versions of popular plays. As Director General, DeMille's inaugural offering was *The Squaw Man* (1914)—a six-reel western that earned a place in history as the first film made in Hollywood.

From the start, spectacle was a staple of DeMille's style. His premier period drama—*Joan the Woman* (1916)—was the first film to employ the Handschiegl Color Process to add fire to its images. He toyed with flashback techniques, then found his forte telling Bible stories. He filmed his earliest version of *The Ten Commandments* in 1923 on an enormous sphinx-filled set built into California's Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. The grand scale and lavish pageantry suited him, and he mined scripture for material forever after, completing *The King of Kings* (1927), *Samson and Delilah* (1949), and a remake of *The Ten Commandments* (1959) as his last trip through Exodus at the close of his career.

As the years passed, DeMille accumulated accolades and automobiles. In addition to his 1930 Cadillac 452A, he purchased a 1920 Locomobile 48, a 1936 Cord 810, and a 1947 DeSoto Suburban. Yet the Caddy remained closest to his heart. In 1950, when his fellow



**KING OF KINGS:** Director Cecil B. DeMille liked pageantry no matter the story behind it. In 1938, he loaned his seven-passenger Cadillac V-16 to Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt so the latter could travel US Highway 101 from Long Beach to San Diego and dedicate the San Diego Civic Center. DeMille was a lifelong Republican.

auteur Billy Wilder filmed *Sunset Boulevard* as a homage to early Hollywood, DeMille agreed to appear in the picture playing himself—with the condition that Paramount give him "a new 1949 black Cadillac seven-passenger limousine."

After DeMille died in 1959, his V-16 Cadillac became part of a collection owned by Wisconsin antique-car king Wally Rank. It was sold to the Imperial Palace of Las Vegas in 1981 and purchased by Jack Boison Nethercutt, founder and namesake of the Nethercutt Museum, in 1983. It remains a star of the Nethercutt Collection and a testament to the way in which the romance of the road became an American religion.

"The film industry's rise has paralleled the rise of the automobile," DeMille wrote in later years. "[It] reflects the love of motion and speed, the restless urge toward improvement and expansion, the kinetic energy of a young, vigorous nation. It is not surprising, then, that the people who make movies have always been among the most enthusiastic customers for whatever Detroit has to offer."

Amen.

—THOMAS ARTHUR REPP





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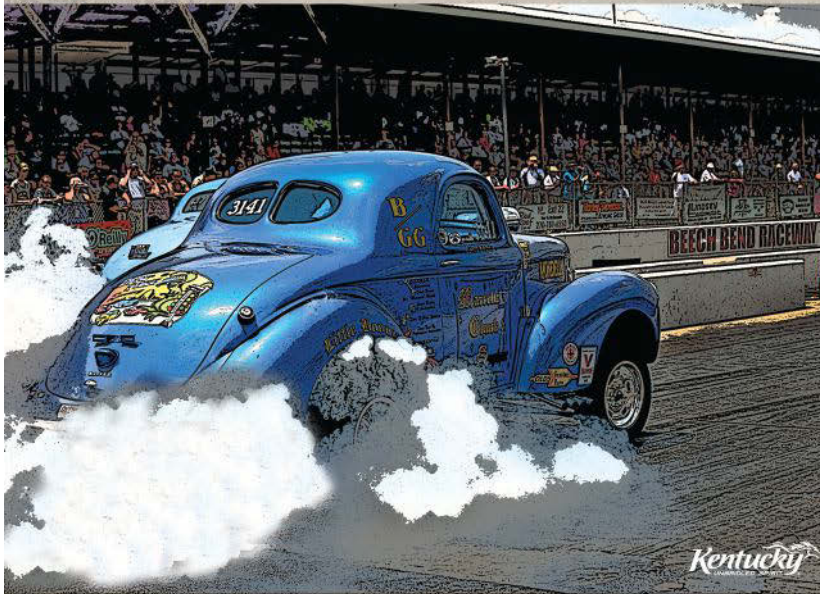
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# THINKIN' LINCOLN

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• BY KARRAS STRASBURG & MICHAEL DWYER

## "Miss Gish from Massillon"

**T**he moment was unrehearsed yet tunelessly amusing: Silent movie director D. W. Griffith—that iconic master of the quiet image widely hailed as "The Father of Film"—couldn't keep his mouth shut.

Nineteen-year-old stage actress Lillian Gish had come to the Biograph Studios to visit an old friend who'd made good in the movies when Griffith spied her on the edge of his set. He was instantly smitten with her doll-like features, dainty frame, and ethereal elegance—and knew at once that he wanted to cast her in an upcoming motion picture. Creatively intrigued and artistically awed, his emotion found expression in a melody. As the great auteur approached Gish, he serenaded her with stanzas from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 1787 opera *Don Giovanni*:

*Là ci darem la mano,  
Là mi dirai di sì:  
Vedì, non è lontano,  
Partiam, ben mio, da qui.*

The enthusiasm of the invitation was unmistakable. *I'll give you my hand*, the translated lines promised, *There you'll say yes....* Griffith meant to make of Gish a leading lady who might rival Mary Pickford in screen appeal, and he wasn't interested in brooking delay.

In short order, Gish and her tagalong sister, Dorothy, were signing contracts to star in the seventeen-minute film *An Unseen Enemy*, and Griffith was predicting their meteoric rise. Gish never would forget the exuberance of his overture. When he asked her whence she hailed, and she answered, "Massillon, Ohio," Griffith made a game of the name. He called the city "Massillyoon."

"It seemed to amuse him to mispronounce the name," Gish later revealed in her book, *The Movies, Mr. Griffith, and Me*.

Yet Massillon was a winner that day—if only for the way in which it, too, was ushered into the limelight. Lillian Gish had been born in Springfield, Ohio, but during her early years as a stage performer, she spent summers living with her aunt and uncle in Massillon. The couple cautioned the girl against discussing her show business ambitions with area residents: Small-town Ohioans didn't think highly of the acting profession. Lillian kept quiet, and the hushed house on Fourth Street became the only real childhood home she ever knew.



**GRIFFITH'S GIRL:** During her younger years, actress Lillian Gish often stayed in Massillon, Ohio, at a house owned by her aunt and uncle, Emily and Frank Cleaver. The home still stands.



**THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY** (1913) travels from New York to San Francisco via New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. An early routing dipped through Denver.

Viewing the humble haven today, one wonders if its demeanor changed the day Griffith began shaping Gish into "The Fist Lady of the American Cinema." Did its walls echo with excitement? Did rejoicing raise its roof? Or did it stand as silently as it does now, proving—as Gish was destined to do—that one picture could say more than six reels of words?

## Reel Deal

The debut of *An Unseen Enemy* marked the start of a seventy-five-year career in motion pictures for Lillian Gish. During the months that followed, she appeared in dozens of films for Biograph, including *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912)—a city-bound short hailed as history's first gangster film—and *Judith of Bethulia* (1914), a biblical drama about the Old Testament widow who defied the Assyrian army. Gish achieved full-fledged stardom in 1915 when she essayed the starring role in *The Birth of a Nation*—Griffith's controversial twelve-reel opus about the American Civil War and Southern Reconstruction.

That same year, a grocer in Massillon, Ohio, opened a movie mecca that is associated with Lillian Gish to this day. John E. McLain may or may not have been a fan of the budding starlet, but he did have faith in the 1913 Lincoln Highway. The cross-country route sliced directly through Massillon on Lincoln Way—so that's where McLain built his Lincoln Theatre.





On opening night—November 23, 1915—huge bouquets of flowers adorned every theatre box. Stardust filled patrons' eyes.

Newspaper reporters likened the opulence to a dream. "It was as if [attendees] were in New York," one correspondent observed, revelling in the cinema's sumptuous details. All were impressed with the \$110,000 price tag. The Lincoln was the most expensive theatre Ohio had ever built.

Gish became part of the Lincoln Theatre's program a short time after its opening, when her features *Diane of the Follies* (1916) and *The House Built Upon Sand* (1916) graced its silver screen. Both films have subsequently been lost to posterity, but the Lincoln has never forgotten its love for Lillian. Decades after it became the last surviving picture palace in town—and a venue maintained by the Massillon Lions Club—the classic cinema began hosting the Lillian and Dorothy Gish Film Festival. Silent-film fan Joseph Rubin founded that annual celebration to help the Lincoln survive. "I read an article in the local newspaper that indicated the theatre was struggling to pay its heating bills," Rubin remembers. "I didn't want to see this beautiful 1915 theatre close its doors, so I founded the festival to help raise money."

Screening 35mm prints of features such as *Broken Blossoms* (1919)—a D. W. Griffith love story about a Chinese immigrant (Richard Barthelmess) and an abused Cockney waif (Lillian Gish)—the festival attracted audience members from across North America. Years of success followed, and today vintage films and live performances continue to entertain customers of the Lincoln—along with the resident ghosts rumored to fill empty seats and "shush" noisy patrons.

### On with the Show

One of the most celebrated cinematic images of Lillian Gish is presented throughout D. W. Griffith's 1916 epic *Intolerance*—a three-and-a-half-hour masterpiece that interweaves four parallel stories into one dramatic whole. Gish plays the Eternal Mother—an archetypal figure who exists in a timeless space where all ages converge—and sits, endlessly rocking an infant in a cradle. Ironically, the woman who committed this picture to celluloid never married and never had children. Gish devoted her life's energy to her work and a few causes close to her heart.



**GIMME AN "L":** [Left and above] The monogram of the Lincoln Theatre in Massillon, Ohio, is a stylish "L" that should look familiar to any aficionado of historic highways. The form of the letter mirrors that found on markers serving the Lincoln Highway. [Below] Lillian Gish served as the link between the four stories of *Intolerance*—the "Uniter of Here and Hereafter"—endlessly rocking a cradle.



As she grew older, Gish maintained an affectionate relationship with her adopted hometown. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Massillon rebuilt its infrastructure around the Tuscarawas River, raising roads and levees to safeguard citizens from fickle floodwaters. When the Cherry Road viaduct was completed in September 1951, Gish attended the dedication as a guest of honor and tossed a bouquet of roses into the river as part of the ceremony. The ten-million-dollar project created a small exit ramp attached to Lincoln Way that came to be called "Lillian Gish Boulevard."





**CIVIC CLASS:** [Above] Lillian Gish is flanked by oratoric soloist Irene Beamer and Mayor Junie Weirich during the 1951 Cherry Road viaduct dedication ceremony. To christen the span, Gish dropped roses into the river: Officials decided that the use of a champagne bottle would require the actress to muster “too much of a swing.”



**GIMME AN “A”:** [Above] Gish items displayed at the Massillon Museum include a dress Lillian wore in her 1937 Broadway drama *The Star-Wagon*. [Left and below] Massillon artist Scot Phillips adapted his design for the south face of the local pumping station from promotional posters for Gish’s 1926 film *The Scarlet Letter*.



“Lillian always wanted to make sure that the memory of her sister was not forgotten,” says Joseph Rubin. “Initially, she wanted the street to be called ‘Dorothy and Lillian Gish Way.’ She only consented to the shortening of the street name to ‘Lillian Gish Boulevard’ when she was told that the street was shorter than her proposed name.”

The christening of the boulevard—and Gish’s participation in the viaduct dedication—served as the culmination to a civic story started decades earlier: In 1927, the *Massillon Independent* audaciously nominated Gish to the office of city mayor. At the time, cowboy humorist Will Rogers was serving an elected term as the municipal head of Hollywood, and Gish’s backers believed she could bring the same national attention to northeastern Ohio. “Were Massillon to go before the country with its advantages, people would say, ‘Oh yes, that’s Lillian Gish’s town,’” the *Independent* said of the scheme. “They might become so familiar with the place, through newspaper stories of Miss Gish’s administration, that two out of the 118,970,000 strangers in the country would pronounce the name alike.”

Gish’s inauguration never took place, but the idea that her image could define Massillon was never abandoned. In 2010, acting mayor Frank Cicchinelli commissioned local artist Scot Phillips to paint portraits of the star on a flood-control pump station located along the east bank of the Tuscarawas River at Lillian Gish Boulevard and Ohio State Route 21. Serendipity blessed the project from the start: When Gish was nominated for Massillon mayor, she’d recently moved to MGM and finished filming a screen adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s puritan masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter* (1926). As Phillips toyed with mural designs, he found himself drawn to images from that production. In the end, he re-created the film’s promotional poster—depicting Gish as heroine Hester Prynne wearing the blushing red “A”—on the pump station’s south side.

### The Road Gish Traveled

Gish didn’t live to see her likeness rendered so lovingly at Massillon’s heart, although she did make one final pilgrimage to the city before her death in 1993 at age 99. That trip took place during the early 1980s and saw the legendary actress speaking from the pulpit at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church—the church of her confirmation. Her address assumed the earnestness of a sermon even when her subject seemed more suitable to a confessional.





"I always thought of myself as a painter," she said of filmmaking. "Only I didn't have the advantage of keeping the painting until I made it as perfect as I could." Gish recalled her childhood summers spent in Massillon and the rigors of theatrical life on the road. And she spoke of her own evolution with regard to the way she viewed motion pictures—seeing them first as an ephemeral fad, then a formidable art, and finally nothing less than a universal language that had the power to move men and mountains in the flicker of a frame.

Indeed, although it was D. W. Griffith who first envisioned the impact Lillian Gish would make in silent pictures, it was Gish herself who completed the portrait. Nothing better illustrates the skill with which she rendered her art than *The Wind* (1928)—the last silent picture she made. Adapted from the Dorothy Scarborough novel of the same name at Gish's insistence—and directed by Swedish auteur

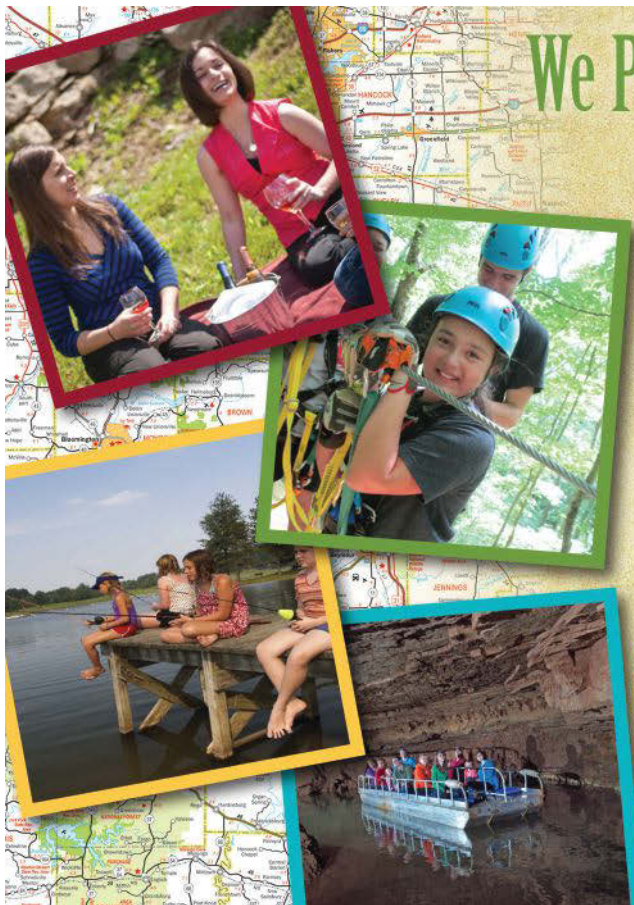
Victor Sjöström at her request—this soundless tale of prairie madness became Gish's pet project even as the rest of the world was trumpeting pictures that talked. Her effort resulted in an epic universally ranked among the greatest silent films of all time—the creation of a landscape in which words *couldn't* exist—the perfect picture of silence.

Massillon, Ohio, can see itself in a corner of that picture. So can any celluloid connoisseur who considers movies more than scribbled scripts. In the world of Lillian Gish, image was everything—something that struck one speechless—even if, on occasion, there was an echo of *Don Giovanni* in the breeze. ♥

KARRAS STRASBURG and MICHAEL DWYER are Roadside Contributors for AMERICAN ROAD. Gish home, dedication, and *The Star-Wagon* dress photos courtesy Massillon Museum. Lincoln Theatre exterior photo in public domain; interior photos courtesy Lions Lincoln Theatre. Mural photos courtesy Scot Phillips.







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AMERICAN ROAD'S

# SILENT ERA

RACES, CHASES, BUMPERS, AND BANANAS ON THE EARLY SCREEN

*Films*



• BY THOMAS ARTHUR REPP



## A BEAST AT BAY (1912)

"To cover his trail, he takes the girl with him."

Credit the combined talents of the director D. W. Griffith and actress Mary Pickford with crafting a silent movie so fierce audiences could almost hear it snarl. *A Beast at Bay*, a Biograph offering from 1912, may seem tame by today's standards, but on its debut it was viewed as a new kind of animal—a menacing breed of cinema that refused to curl up in anyone's lap.

The first frames of the picture promise conflict: An escaped criminal (Alfred Paget) slinks through the woods, tracked by a troop of armed police. Cut to a residential street, where a young woman (Pickford) and her beau (Edwin August) are suffering a setback in their courtship. When she drives off alone in her automobile, certainty says she'll encounter the jail-breaker—and so she does. The convict hijacks her car, then forces her at gunpoint to act as his getaway driver.

The heart of the film is given over to a chase sequence that has been called the first great pursuit of the silent cinema. The young woman's boyfriend—who witnessed her abduction from a distance—commands a locomotive and races after the car along a track that parallels the road. Griffith increases the tension with his direction, employing tracking shots, diagonal movements, and reverses in perspective to up the angst and suspense. Pickford, fortunately, was not afraid of speed, although her mother feared she'd hit the highway to heaven. "[S]he prayed alongside of the race track while I ran a high-power car around a curve," Pickford told *The New York Dramatic Mirror*. "The first time around, Mr. Griffith shouted, 'Not fast enough!' That made me mad, so I let it out and took my foot off the clutch. The owner was crouching in the back of the car on the floor. . . . He said afterward that he had shuddered, not at what would become of the car, but what he thought was going to happen to me."

What happened to Mary Pickford, of course, was that she became the Queen of Hollywood—and *A Beast at Bay* became a domestic pet whose tricks have influenced nearly every American chase scene since.



Released May 27, 1912 • Biograph Company • 17 minutes • Directed by D. W. Griffith • Distributed by General Film Company • Starring Mary Pickford, Edwin August, Alfred Paget

## THE GARAGE (1920)

"The boss never struck oil; he found it drop by drop."

Ah, the garage—that oleaginous, empowering arena wherein the most modest of men can become the keenest mechanics. During the 1910s and 1920s—long before Midas and Meineke took over the territory—the neighborhood auto repair shop emitted a nigh magical air: Chassis dented and dinged, axles broken and bent, engines fiery or frozen—all were rolled behind those amazing doors to re-emerge whole and ready to roll.

Roscoe Arbuckle and Buster Keaton tinker with that mystique throughout *The Garage*—their study of super service in the land of spark plugs and oil pans. Wielding rags and wrenches, they leap over wheels as a matter of course, clap customers inside rental cars even as those vehicles are pattering out the door, and wash cars and clients alike on a giant spinning turntable. Don't mind the gunk and grime—just enjoy the crude ballet. It sparkles in its homage to an American institution and shines in the slick picture only Arbuckle could draw: Light work with heavy objects—a hefty yet agile engine that runs on gags.

Between 1917 and 1920, Arbuckle and Keaton made fourteen films together. *The Garage* marks the end of their madcap partnership. Outside, the shape of screen comedy was changing faster than a breakaway Ford. After completing *The Garage*, Arbuckle left Comique to star in lighter feature films; Keaton assumed control of the old unit and began producing a cooler-headed comedy that became his stone-faced trademark. The Arbuckle trials of 1921 and 1922—in which film comedy's first superstar was accused of a crime he did not commit—effectively robbed Hollywood of its innocence and ensured that the golden days of guileless knockabout were gone. Arbuckle seems to anticipate and acknowledge the farewell in a prescient scene in *The Garage*. Before he lays himself down to sleep, he chastely kisses a small portrait affixed to the wall. The face in the photo is that of Mabel Normand, Arbuckle's frequent screen partner during his early Keystone days, when comedy was fast, furious, and always about good mechanics.



Released January 11, 1920 • Comique Film Company • 25 minutes • Presented by Joseph M. Schenck • Directed by Roscoe Arbuckle • Starring Roscoe Arbuckle, Buster Keaton



## HOBOKEN TO HOLLYWOOD (1926)

"I'd go with you—but my shoes squeak!"



**T**he movie travelogue has been part of the cinematic repertoire since 1904, when professional globetrotter Elliot Burton Holmes began screening film clips as part of his educational lectures. "To travel is to possess the world," Holmes was wont to tell wannabe wayfarers. Presumably, he never argued the point with comedian Billy Bevan, clown Vernon Dent, or any member of the crew responsible for the production of *Hoboken to Hollywood*, a loopy look at early auto travel through the Southwest. "To travel is to skew the view," they may have answered, sitting on a patch of prickly pear and smiling for the camera with faces full of cactus quills.

Bevan stars as Billy Judkins—an obnoxiously jocular fellow who works in urban New Jersey until the day his boss bids him travel to the company's California office. Billy, his wife (Leonora Summers), and mother-in-law (Anna Magruder) hit the slaphappy highway, where they meet Mr. Pinkley (Vernon Dent) and his bride (Thelma Hill), who are also going to the Golden State. The two parties head into a landscape that increasingly looks like it belongs on the cracked side of the looking-glass: In this version of Arizona, petrified trees grow upright and sport placards bearing the Latin phrase *A Deo et rege*—"From God and King." Cacti cleaved in two spout water like shattered fire hydrants. Free-ranging cows roam the night with weird glow-in-the-dark eyes. Travelers mistake them for Indians, although the Indians live in a nearby cabin and raise turkeys. The rabid white rabbit that later caused carnage in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) is out here, too, hiding beneath a broken conestoga, surrounded by bleached bones.

The humor in this short is neither subtle nor sensitive. Laughs are had at the expense of everyone. The most brutal guffaw is reserved for the ending, when Billy—beaten black-and-blue by his new boss—receives a telegram instructing him to return to New Jersey. He staggers outside to see his battered car collapse in a heap. "Now we can walk back and see the country right!" he says optimistically. *Ouch*.

Released September 5, 1926 • Mack Sennett Comedies • 19 minutes • Produced by Mack Sennett • Directed by Del Lord • Starring Billy Bevan, Vernon Dent, Thelma Hill

## THE ROARING ROAD (1919)

"He's got pep enough to talk back to St. Peter himself if he dared dispute his right of way!"



**R**acing films have historically run laps around their box office competition. Beginning with Georges Méliès' 1905 French speed farce *An Adventurous Automobile Trip* (opposite) and extending to *The Fast and the Furious* franchise of today, motor movies showcase the action that packs 'em in and clocks profits with every mile. Viewed from the judges' stand, few vehicles have performed as well as *The Roaring Road*—a 1919 outing that set fans cheering from slick start to speedy finish.

The film is most notable for the heat it packs under its hood. Leading man Wallace Reid was at the height of his combustible career in 1919—a dashing, devil-may-care speed demon who set ladies' hearts ablaze simply by idling by. In *The Roaring Road*, he's given good reason to rev up his romantic engine. Reid plays Walter Thomas "Toodles" Walden, a car salesman who yearns to drive a speedster. His boss is a grizzled curmudgeon called The Bear—owner of the Darco Motor Company and father of the girl Toodles loves. Toodles wants a wife; Daddy wants a racing record—and so begins a plot that will prompt the young suitor to drive across country at breakneck speeds.

The racing footage is tame by today's standards, but it's still fun to watch Reid take his cinematic turns. Here was a matinee idol genuinely obsessed with wheels, the first screen sex symbol to successfully marry man with machine. When he wasn't in front of the cameras, Reid was racing around Hollywood in a baby-blue Stutz Bearcat, blaring a horn wired to play "Yankee Doodle Dandy"—a carefree pursuit that only increased his female appeal. Indeed, the popularity of *The Roaring Road*; its sequel, *Excuse My Dust* (1920); and other Reid offerings that followed firmly defined the moving image of the all-American male as a fellow who barreled through life with flash, class, and brass—and somehow always rolled into the winner's circle.

Released April 27, 1919 • Paramount Pictures • 58 minutes • Produced by Jesse L. Lasky • Directed by James Cruze • Starring Wallace Reid, Ann Little, Theodore Roberts



## MABEL AT THE WHEEL (1914)

"They're goin' the wrong way!"

For the comedienne widely regarded as the greatest to grace the silent screen, *Mabel at the Wheel* was a well-earned victory lap: Funny girl Mabel Normand had paid her fare to reach the fast track. In 1912—in *A Dash Through the Clouds*—she became the first actress to be filmed riding in an airplane. The following year, she cheered race car legend Teddy Tetzlaff in *The Speed Kings*, inspired a rivalry between cab drivers in *The Fatal Taxicab*, and spent time chained to a railroad track in the path of an oncoming train during *Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life*.

Now she was in the driver's seat—literally and figuratively: Her boss, Mack Sennett, had given her a green light to direct her own movies. Normand tried her hand at a number of one-reelers and then hit the gas with *Mabel at the Wheel*—a film that tinkered with her love of motorcars and added a feminist twist: In the picture, she plays the fickle sweetheart of a good-natured race car driver (Harry McCoy) who becomes deeply devoted when she attends the track. On the day of a big race, jealous forces kidnap her beau to ensure he can't compete, so she dons his pants and goggles and drives his car to victory.

*Mabel at the Wheel* was filmed in early 1914, using the crowds and the cars that gathered for the Vanderbilt Cup at Santa Monica, California. To capture close-ups of car and driver, Normand developed a device that might have done D. W. Griffith proud: She mounted a platform to the hood of her vehicle, secured a camera atop that base, and bid a Keystone technician ride along to turn the crank as she banked her way through the turns. Her invention became an industry staple.

Scenes were intercut with footage captured from the genuine Vanderbilt contest—including a shot of a rollover accident incorporated into Mabel's final push to triumph. The result was a film of accelerating energy that seemed to please everyone, with the exception of Charlie Chaplin—who complained of artistic differences with Normand and soon secured his own right to steer pictures from start to finish.



Released April 18, 1914 • Keystone Film Company • 18 minutes • Produced by Mack Sennett • Directed by Mabel Normand • Starring Mabel Normand, Charles Chaplin, Harry McCoy

## AN ADVENTUROUS AUTOMOBILE TRIP (1905)

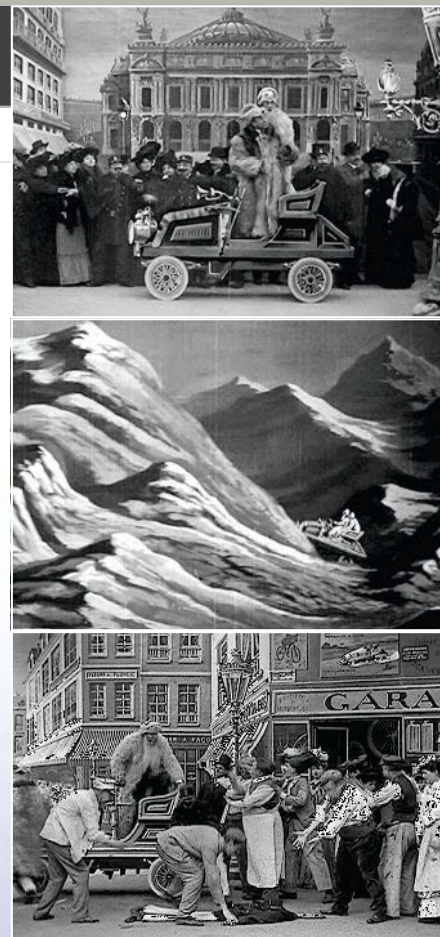
"Le Raid Paris–Monte-Carlo en Deux Heures."

Parisian magician and pioneer moviemaker Georges Méliès earned international acclaim crafting cinematic marvels that took filmgoers on fantastic excursions. During *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), he shot a rocket ship into the eye of old Luna and portrayed scientists battling crab-like Selenites found scuttling around the lunar core. His solar follow-up, *The Impossible Voyage* (1904), sent a space-train chugging down the sun's blazing throat, while the topper to his trilogy—*The Conquest of the Pole* (1912)—turned its attentions to the earth's arctic top.

Given Méliès' interest in mechanical gadgets, he found the automobile irresistible. He was also amused at the escapades of King Leopold II of Belgium, who exhibited a mania for motorcars despite his high incidence of collision and crack-up. And so, in 1905, Méliès released *An Adventurous Automobile Trip* as a royal joke—a bogus travelogue—that finds His Highness driving from Paris to Monte Carlo and rolling over, into, and through everything in his way.

The movie abounds in imaginative turns. Early in the outing—after Leopold employs a funnel the size of a tuba to fill his gas tank—the king inadvertently backs his car over a policeman. The cop's body is left flat as a pancake—cartoon thin—and like a casualty in a later Looney Tunes short, the aid offered him is animated and absurd: Leopold and several bystanders attach air pumps to the unlucky lawman and reinflate his shape—until one puff too many causes the poor bobbie to burst.

The remainder of the film is a gleeful study in stagey stunts, special effects, and stop-motion effects as Leopold continues to plow down postmen, ram coal tar trucks, and tackle the Alps with the avidity of a roller coaster enthusiast. In the final scene, the king arrives at Monte Carlo and promptly drives his car up a grandstand swarming with spectators. No one seems outraged; on the contrary, the loyal mob heartily congratulates the misguided liege as if he'd intended to barrel over everybody all along.



Released August 19, 1905 • Star-Film • 10 minutes • Produced by Georges Méliès • Written and directed by Georges Méliès • Starring Fernande Albany, Henry Fragson, Félix Galipaux



## THE FIRST AUTO (1927)

"Hurry up, *Progress*—don't keep me waitin'!"



**T**he subtitle of *The First Auto* calls the film *A Romance of the Last Horse and the First Horseless Carriage*. Sure. Cue the cozy music, and serve up a candlelight dinner of carrots and spark plugs.

A more appropriate tagline might have touted the picture as "Whinnies Vs. Lizzies." This melodrama portrays a competition—a high-stakes contest between hooves and hubcaps—that happens to open on a nostalgic note: Hank Armstrong (Russell Simpson), celebrated citizen of Maple City, Indiana, wins another harness race. As the owner of the local A-1 Livery, Armstrong knows his nags. His neighbors believe he understands everything about speed—until the day a horseless carriage comes to town. The motorized buggy is bought by the region's wealthiest resident, who promptly steers it through several fences and into a lake. Yet people are impressed with the new invention, and like the jilted groom he is, Armstrong resents the attention the machine steals from his steeds.

Thus begins a battle between Armstrong's stable and an increasing army of automobiles. Skirmishes grow heated; rocks are hurled through windshields, and sulfur is spooned into fuel tanks. The picture reaches its poignant peak when Armstrong challenges a mechanic to a car-versus-horse race at the fairgrounds. Armstrong prevails but admits bewilderment when spectators swarm his opponent's car. "What are they doin' over there—don't they know we won?" he asks his last supporter. "Sure, Hank," the other answers, "but it's nothing to see a buggy go *with* a horse—the wonder is to see a buggy go *without*..."

*The First Auto* was issued with a sound-on-disc recording that spun music, sound effects, and a few stray words into the amazed ears of its audience. Today its soundtrack plays clunky—not unlike the *deus ex machina* that allows this tale a happy ending. Of course, that device arrives in the form of a modern machine and not a winged horse from Mount Olympus: Armstrong and son open a garage, and the last pony in town is left to graze on a hillside—the faithful friend from a forgotten love story.

Released September 18, 1927 • Warner Bros. • 75 minutes • Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck • Directed by Roy Del Ruth • Starring Russell Simpson, Charles Emmett Mack, Douglas Gerrard

## SPEEDY (1928)

"If I ever want to commit suicide, I'll call you."



**H**arold Lloyd was at his best battling the clock. Whether he was racing to marry his lady love in *Girl Shy* (1924) or clinging to a sky-high dial in *Safety Last!* (1923), he was a hero in a hurry. *Speedy*—Lloyd's last silent feature—is a fast film, too, but one that wrestles with the way the rush of progress can outpace the simple pleasures of life.

The story concerns the last horse-drawn trolley operating in New York City—a well-worn track driven every day by beloved conductor Pop Dillon (Bert Woodruff) even though powerful interests press him to sell. The stubborn old man has a spunky young granddaughter named Jane (Ann Christy). Lloyd's character—Harold "Speedy" Swift—loves her, and so the family's plight becomes his own.

*Speedy* was filmed on location in the Big Apple during the Roaring Twenties. At the time, the metropolis was assuming the frenetic pace it retains, and the film captures that growing momentum at Coney Island, Times Square, and on the street. When Harold takes a job as a taxi driver, he picks up a fare on First Avenue who turns out to be baseball slugger Babe Ruth on his way to Yankee Stadium. The enamored cabbie can't keep his eyes on the road—not with the home run king sitting in his humble hack—despite the mad crush of onrushing and side-swiping vehicles. At ride's end, a shaken Bambino exits the cab and quips, "If I ever want to commit suicide, I'll call you." The pandemonium never troubles Harold.

Yet he gains perspective before undertaking his last dash through the streets: Harold uncovers a plot to swindle Pop out of his property, and he must drive the trolley across the city at a whirlwind pace to save the day. That final ride plays like an urban version of the chariot race from *Ben-Hur* (1959) with a manhole cover filling in for a missing wheel and the entire world careening off track. By the final fade-out, viewers are breathless from the lurches and laughs. But Harold's character is ready for a slow honeymoon to Niagara Falls, and *Speedy* has become the fastest film ever made that argues we should all slow down.

Released April 7, 1928 • The Harold Lloyd Corporation • 85 minutes • Produced by Harold Lloyd • Directed by Ted Wilde • Starring Harold Lloyd, Ann Christy, Bert Woodruff



## JONAH JONES (1924)

"Country Sweethearts—out for a Sunday joyride with half the joy and twice the ride."

Lloyd "Ham" Hamilton knew his bananas—and he wasn't afraid to use them. His comedy *Jonah Jones* may be the only film ever made in which the notoriously slippery fruit is used to give an automobile a nudge. The setup is simple: Ham is eager to leave a wedding—he's helping the bride escape her engagement—but his car is parked bumper-to-bumper between other vehicles. As a crowd closes in—led by the bride's furious father—Ham obtains motion with monkey business: He tosses a banana toward the old man. Pop skids on the peel and falls face-first into the Ford, inadvertently shoving it into the street and allowing the fugitives to flee.

Such is the caliber of cleverness with which Hamilton instilled his films—a quality that prompted Charlie Chaplin to proclaim Ham the only clown for whom he felt envy. During the early 1920s, Ham was hailed as a comedian's comedian—an elite funnyman who gave professional jesters the giggles. With his fey expression, checkered cap, and waddling walk, his character went nowhere fast and found new ways to get there.

*Jonah Jones* is an off-kilter love story defined by automobiles. Its opening scene is an ode to potholes, as Ham's jalopy jounces its way along a pocked country road like a thing made of Jell-O. Ham is taking his sweetheart (Babe London) for a Sunday drive, although this frumpy farmer's daughter is no fool: She's so certain the car will stall that she's strapped roller skates to her feet so she won't be stranded without wheels. When another woman (Dorothy Seastrom) enters the picture, she arrives as speed queen—a sporty little rich girl leading no fewer than fifteen motorcycle cops on a merry chase. Gates are crashed and gas pedals floored as she burns her way into Ham's rubbery heart.

Unfortunately, much of Lloyd Hamilton's work has burned, too: Most of his films were lost to posterity when Educational Pictures suffered a library fire in 1937. Today, old Ham has been forgotten by all but the staunchest screen buffs, who continue to hail him as a silent-era top banana with superlative appeal.



Released September 21, 1924 • Lloyd Hamilton Corporation • 25 minutes • Produced by Lloyd Hamilton • Directed by Fred Hibbard • Starring Lloyd Hamilton, Babe London

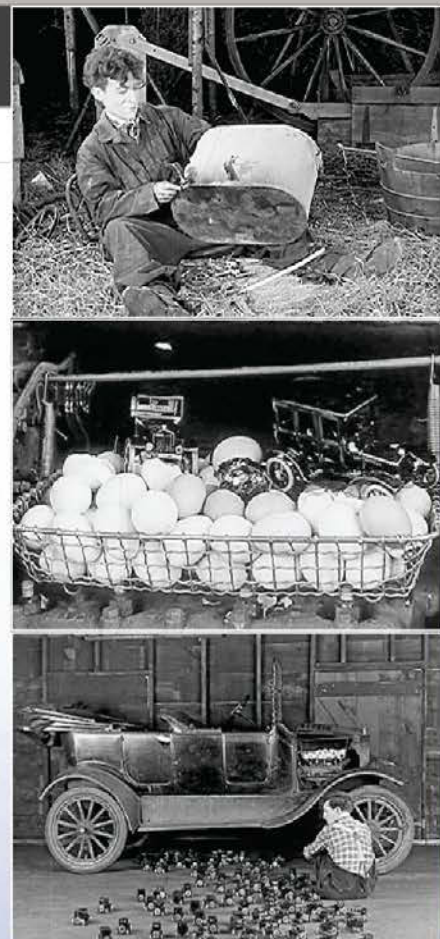
## EGGED ON (1926)

"At the end of the month, Charley hatched the perfect machine."

The scene surely ranks among the oddest to feature an automobile: A basket of eggs, suspended above the hot engine of a Model T Ford, begins to agitate and hatch. One by one, shells crack and flake away, and strange masses squirm into the world. Some sport what appear to be chicken legs; others are globular yokes. Claylike, they shape themselves—sprouting tires, fenders, windshields—until they are all unmistakably revealed as little tin lizzies. By the dozens, they roll over the floor of the barn where this surreal nativity has occurred. The parent car quivers, then settles its frame as if squatting on a nest like a mother hen, and its newly born babies obediently roll beneath it as if they are tired tin chicks.

Iowa-born cartoonist-turned-film-comedian Charley Bowers is today celebrated for his sense of the bizarre. His cinematic oeuvre of weird and wonderful conceits includes an anthropomorphic drop of fuel oil named Pete Roleum, a grafted plant that sprouts house cats, and a fuzz-faced phantom on roller skates who trundles around a domestic home with a cannon. Wheels of any kind seemed to fascinate Bowers: His inventions invariably include them, as if to acknowledge that they truly do make the world go round. Yet *Egged On* is not so much a movie about automobiles as it is a rumination about the transport of goods to market. From the film's first frames—in which Bowers is struck, Sir-Francis-Newton-like, by an egg accidentally dropped from an apartment window—the absurd presentation makes a plausible argument that the world would be better served if the yolks we scramble for breakfast were suited with shells that stretch like tire rubber.

Bowers would revisit his out-of-an-egg automobile effect in his later films *It's a Bird* (1930) and *Believe It or Don't* (1935). The former put a new spin on the gag in telling its story of a Belgish Kongo—a metal-eating bird that lays a single egg every one hundred years that quickly grows into a full-size Model T.



Released September 6, 1926 • Bowers Comedy Corporation • 24 minutes • Produced by Charles R. Bowers • Directed by Charles R. Bowers, Harold L. Muller, Ted Sears • Starring Charles R. Bowers



## IT'S A GIFT (1923)

"My gas'll startle the world. It's a knock-out!"



Weller Pump, president of the Onion Oil Company, is concerned about competition: Crude dealers have taken to the streets, selling slick fuels to a public easily swindled. "Power! One drop of our oil would move Pikes Peak to Pittsburgh!" one greasy drip boasts to a captivated crowd. He touches a burning match to a bead of his company's best—and sets off a blast that leaves investors and onlookers dangling from canopies and rooftops.

Something must be done, and so Onion asks ace inventor Snub Pollard to demonstrate his new gasoline pill. The turbo tablet may save the day—if executives can rouse Pollard from his bed. There, the great man lies, resting body and mind. Around him, gadgets and gizmos are set into motion at the tug of a tassel. They perform every chore for the innovator—from preparing his breakfast to pulling on his pants.

The kicks in *It's a Gift* are derived from the film's ambitious contraptions—a Murphy bed that folds into its wall to become a roaring fireplace; bedsheets that spring to the window and hang as curtains; a can marked GARBAGE that—deprived of its "B"—becomes a bona fide garage. The most famous sequence in the picture begins when Pollard produces his personal car from that port. It's a motorless shell shaped like a bullet. Pollard climbs inside, then points a huge horseshoe magnet at passing traffic to pull himself this way and that along the route to his appointment.

At the film's climax, Pollard distributes gasoline tablets to a fleet of test vehicles. ("Only one drop to an automobile—two to flivvers," he instructs drivers.) The pills successfully pep up pistons—as a high-speed, tin lizzie free-for-all shows. But in the end, genuine progress proves elusive: The autos explode—like that drop of contraband oil featured near the film's beginning—and dazed drivers are left deliriously twisting steering wheels on rooftops while everyone else goes back to the drawing board.

Released October 14, 1923 • Hal Roach Studios • 14 minutes • Produced by Hal Roach • Directed by Hugh Fay • Starring Snub Pollard, William Gillespie

## DON'T PARK THERE! (1924)

"Fowl, this ain't no place for us—"



Why did the chicken cross the road?

The poor cluck couldn't find a parking space.

At least, that's the explanation suggested by *Don't Park There!*—a 1924 offering from the Hal Roach Studios that examines the way in which desperate motorists vie to squeeze wheeled vehicles into arbitrary squares. The study in frustration stars cowboy humorist Will Rogers—here playing "Jubilo," his country bumpkin counterpart—and a feathered fugitive from the farm who accompanies him on an urban odyssey through the land of automobiles. At the outset, Jubilo's family sends him to a drugstore in Ogden, Utah, to procure a bottle of Doane's Horse Liniment. He believes he can retrieve the equine ointment with minimal fuss. Yet he soon learns that big-city congestion requires its own brand of medicine because it gives him a headache.

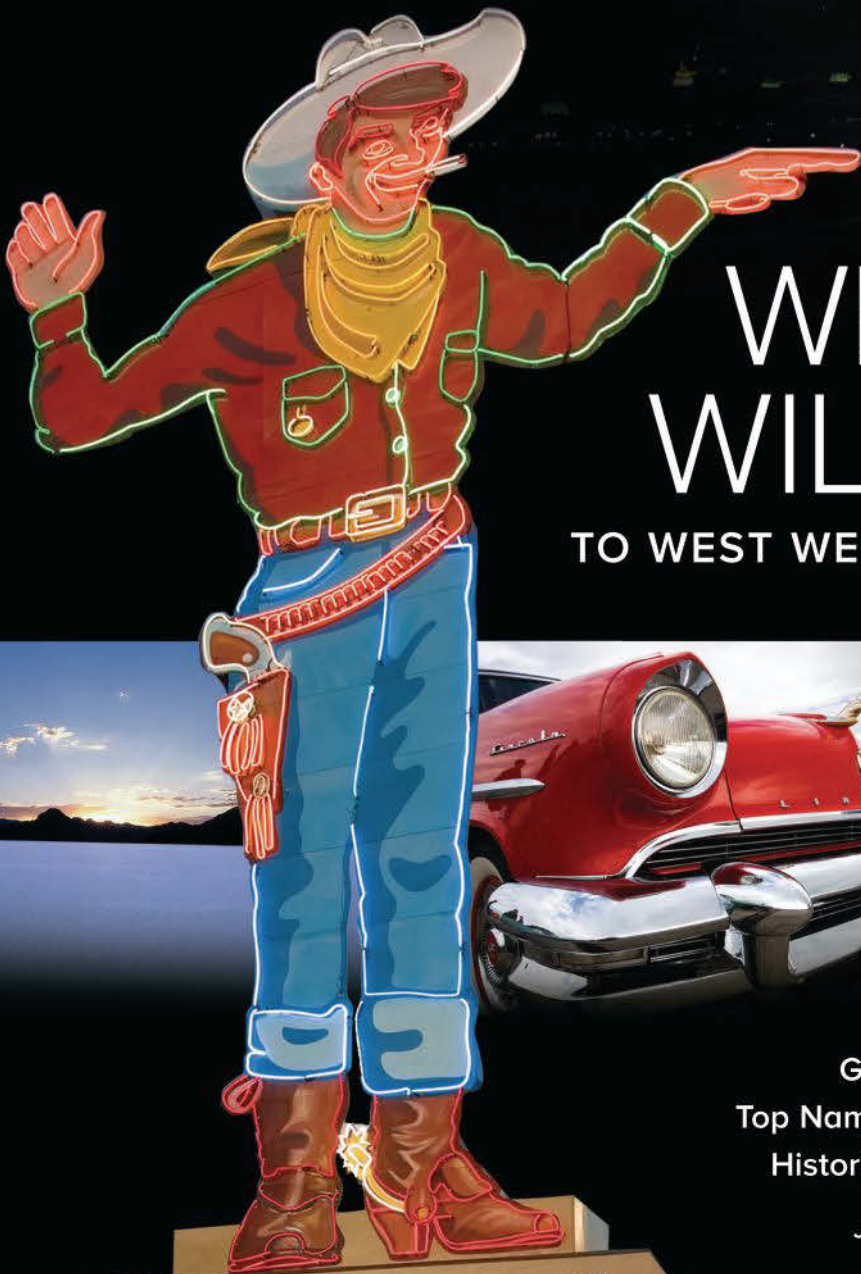
Fighting the tide of traffic, Jubilo attempts to park here, there, and everywhere—only to be taunted, ticketed, and towed away from the curb. Viewers can easily identify with this man in a jam—the plot presents a plight that plagues shoppers to this day—yet the ever-increasing absurdities of Jubilo's dilemma give the story the flavor of a tall tale. Traffic cops, fire plugs, rules and regulations—all push Jubilo further and further from his goal until he's searching Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Seattle in a mad quest to find *any* place to park his car. Eventually, frustration impels him to drive through the front window of a pharmacy, where he's informed that Doane's Horse Liniment hasn't been manufactured in decades.

In the end, he's left with a heap of scrap metal in the middle of a distant road and a long walk home, carrying nothing more than the chicken that has been his constant companion. The fade-out is folksy, nostalgic, and silent, but we can hear the clucking new moral imposed by the mechanizations of modern times: Where there's a will, there may very well be a Rogers—but not necessarily a way. ♥

Released June 22, 1924 • Hal Roach Studios • 20 minutes • Produced by Hal Roach • Directed by Fred Guiol • Starring Will Rogers, Marie Mosquini

THOMAS ARTHUR REPP is the Executive Editor of *American Road*.





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## Pig 'n Whistle Los Angeles

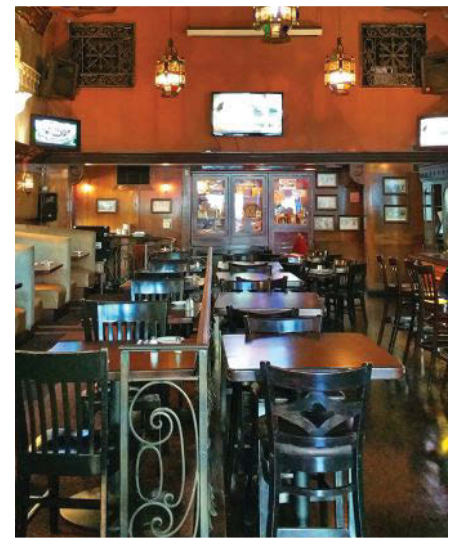
BY JESS WINFIELD

Hollywood Boulevard is a buzzing kaleidoscope. Twenty-somethings sprawl on the sidewalk to take selfies next to their favorite celeb's star on the Walk of Fame. Costumed Spider-Men, Hulks, and Elsas from *Frozen* pose with tourists for five-buck-a-pop photographs. UK-born Chris Breed, co-owner of the historic Pig'n Whistle, sits at a window table in his restaurant, looking out on the madness. "This spot is the heart of Hollywood," he says. "In its glory days, the Pig'n Whistle was where Hollywood met." Indeed, the restaurant's website lists the stars who once imbibed here and their alleged favorite drinks: Clark Gable (whisky), Judy Garland (black tea and vodka), and Shirley Temple (take a guess).

The original Pig'n Whistle opened in 1908 as a candy shop and soda fountain in downtown Los Angeles. By the 1920s it had grown to a successful restaurant chain with outlets all along the West Coast. This location, adjoining Sid Grauman's Egyptian Theater, opened in 1927—ironically, the same year that *The Jazz Singer* heralded the end of the silent-film era. But as Hollywood's Golden Age faded, so did the Pig'n Whistle. The Hollywood location closed in 1952. The space eventually devolved into a Numero Uno pizza joint.

Cut to the late 1990s, when Breed and his partner, Alan Hajjam, fresh from success with the celebrity-studded Roxbury supper club on the Sunset Strip, determined to transform the center of Hollywood from its sordid state—beginning with the Pig'n Whistle. "I felt threatened when I first got here," Breed recalls. "There were metal shutters on all the shops. I was one of the first people to tear them out and put a patio out on Hollywood Boulevard." He and Hajjam also demolished Numero Uno's drop ceiling and found the Pig'n Whistle's elaborately carved oak beams underneath. Some original tiles were discovered in the basement and incorporated into the décor. The restaurant reopened in 2001, aside the recently restored Egyptian. "We brought the glam back to Hollywood," Breed says proudly. "We threw a party for Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston when they were still together. I sat here, at this table, with Jack Nicholson and Kevin Costner."

Despite its starry history, the modern-day Pig'n Whistle has a family feel. The hostess greets regulars with hugs, and children with a bright "Hi, honey!" Two LAPD officers in for lunch stop by the owner's table to reminisce about the bad old days of Hollywood. And the eclectic menu of pizzas, pastas, salads, and sandwiches carries hints of Breed's Cambridgeshire roots. Along with current



Pig'n Whistle • 6714 Hollywood Blvd. • Los Angeles, California 90028 • (323) 463-0000 • pignwhistlehollywood.com



gastropub must-haves like a fresh and tasty Roasted Brussels Sprouts Salad, there are Bangers 'n' Mash, Fish 'n' Chips, even a Rustic Shepherd's Pie: creamy mashed potatoes layered over a sauté of savory ground beef and fresh, al dente peas, carrots, and corn, all topped with melted Jack cheese. "My mum's recipe," Breed confides.

But the most palpable member of the family is present in spirit only. "My dad was a big film guy," Breed says. "He was a joiner and a carpenter, but he loved Charlie Chaplin, and he made movies in his spare time. So my coming here and building a restaurant right in the heart of Hollywood Boulevard was a big deal. I knew my dad was looking down on me, saying 'Make this right.'" ♥

JESS WINFIELD is an author and screenwriter who lives in Los Angeles. All photos by the author.



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# ONE TO 101



CRUISING OUR HISTORIC COASTAL HIGHWAYS

• BY JILLIAN GURNEY

## "The House Charlie Built"

*If you wish to understand a man, old sages insist, you must walk a mile in his shoes.* That's precisely the philosophy that brought actor Robert Downey Jr. to the Montecito Inn during the early 1990s and set him waddling around the lobby like a silent-movie clown.

"He was preparing for the movie *Chaplin*," remembers Montecito Inn Operations Manager Jim Copus, "and he put on slapshoes like the ones Charlie Chaplin wore in his films. He walked the property to get into the spirit of the character."



At first glance, the Montecito Inn doesn't reveal its comic connections. Standing on the edge of historic US Highway 101 in Santa Barbara, the hotel looms elegant and large, with whitewashed walls and a red-tile roof

that evokes a Mediterranean air. Italian marble and French furnishings speak of luxury. But amid the opulence, the face of Chaplin's famous Little Tramp greets guests with observant eyes. His likeness is etched into doorway glass and inked onto motion picture posters. One large image watches tourists from behind the front desk, advertising the 1917 film *The Adventurer* and wordlessly reminding all that Charlie Chaplin built the Montecito in 1928.

At the time, Chaplin was seeking peace and quiet. Talking pictures were pushing silent movies off the screen, and he had yet to decide what to do with the new technology. Eventually, he'd elect to ignore the hullabaloo—at least for a while—and continue to release features without dialogue. In the meantime, he partnered with his old friend Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and other investors to build a shelter from the storm. They opened the Montecito on February 28, 1928.

Chaplin owned a home some ten miles from the inn, so no one can say with cer-



US HIGHWAY 101 travels from Olympia, Washington, to Los Angeles via Oregon. Historically the route extended south to San Ysidro, California, at the border of Mexico.

tainty how frequently he stayed on-site. But when he did, sources suggest, he preferred the Tower Suite—an original upper hideaway that afforded guests seductive views of the Channel Islands and Santa Ynez Mountains. The Tower Suite was the only room accessed by a private stairway—a prized perk for a popular superstar seeking a bit of solitude.

"We had a guest here two years ago," Copus says. "She said her dad had once been the general manager and close friends with Chaplin.







She said that when Charlie would come to the Montecito, she was excited to see him because he was so much fun. He'd drive up from Los Angeles, stay the night, and the next day they would all go to big parties at Hearst Castle."

The Montecito Inn stands a few blocks from the splendor of Butterfly Beach. Chaplin adored the ocean; indeed, he discovered one of his leading ladies while walking at surf's edge. Shortly after the Montecito opened, he encountered Virginia Cherrill—a farmer's daughter from Illinois—and cast her as the blind flower girl in his stubbornly silent masterpiece *City Lights* (1930). She later made Santa Barbara her permanent home.

### The Show Goes On

Inside the Montecito, Chaplin maintained a small screening room. He used the humble cinema to entertain friends. Today that venue serves as an exercise area. It's known as the Limelight Room—a title bestowed in homage to Chaplin's 1952 feature, *Limelight*. In



that film, Chaplin plays Calvero, an aging music hall clown who acts as mentor to an up-and-coming ballerina (Claire Bloom) and beams the changing face of entertainment. One

wonders what he'd say in these days of home media. The Montecito Inn maintains a DVD library of Chaplin's films so guests can watch his movies in the comfort of their rooms.

"We have younger guests who want to watch his films out of curiosity," Copus says, "but we also have fans who will watch three or four films at one sitting."

The exterior of the Montecito Inn has seen few changes since the days when Chaplin frequented the grounds. Windows have

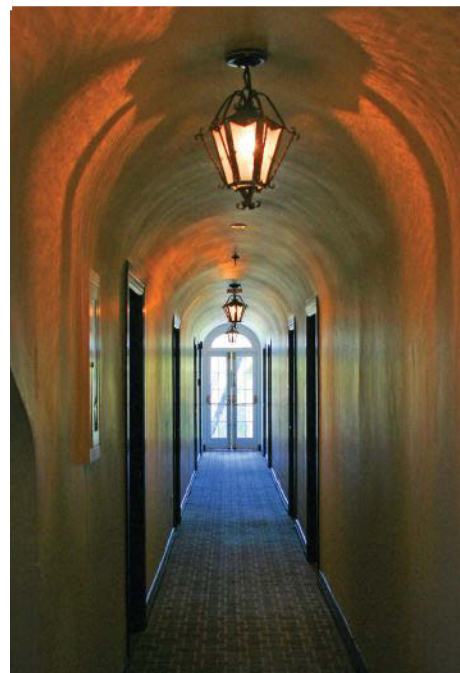
**GOLD RUSH:** [Above, left and right] Guest rooms at the Montecito Inn are steeped in lush comfort—even as they pay tribute to Charlie Chaplin. The Little Tramp appears in costume in paintings on-site. Suites contain posters advertising Chaplin films such as *Modern Times*.

been widened and amenities added to serve the modern traveler, but the classic ambience of the resort remains unchanged. Credit for that integrity must go to the Copus family, who take great pride in operating a landmark with such an intriguing Hollywood history. "My father, Dewayne, bought the property in 1989," Copus says, explaining how he and his brothers started in the business during their high school years serving as bellmen and valets, and manning the front desk. Sometimes, they'd scour grout between tiles with a toothbrush no bigger than Charlie Chaplin's moustache. That's dedication.

Encounters with the Chaplin family have brought their own magic. "Chaplin's granddaughter shot a photo spread here for *Santa Barbara* magazine," Copus says, referring to the time two years ago when Kiera Chaplin made what was billed as a "royal homecoming" to the Montecito. The actress and model posed for fashion photographs in rooms, hallways, and the outside entrance—and borrowed names of her grandfather's films such as *The Great Dictator*, *Triple Trouble*, and *Dough and Dynamite* in naming the portraits.

Of course, the story of Robert Downey Jr.'s visit always entertains. The actor truly did waddle around the Montecito's lobby channeling the spirit of the Little Tramp. Apparently, taking the proverbial walk in another man's shoes helped his understanding: Downey's work in *Chaplin* (1992) earned him an Academy Award.

"We have the same feet," he would later say of the Little Tramp. ♥



**DOUBLE SUITE:** [Below] *Limelight*, the 1952 feature film after which the Montecito's Limelight Room is named, contains the only scene in cinema history to feature Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton together. The pair play two seasoned music hall performers.



JILLIAN GURNEY is an editor for AMERICAN ROAD. Exterior and room photo courtesy Montecito Inn. Painting and hall photographs by the author.



# THINK BIG!

Radio City Music Hall Wurlitzer  
New York, New York

BY LYNN MILLER

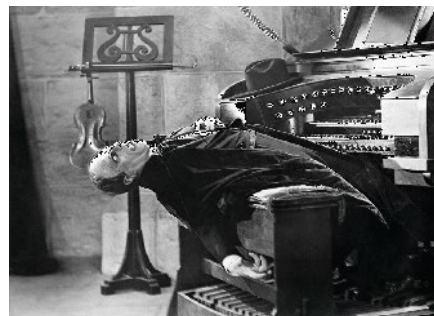
Everyone remembers the shivering scene: Lon Chaney, face encased in a pallid mask, lets his hands creep rhythmically over the keys of a large pipe organ lodged somewhere in the catacombs beneath a Parisian opera house. Smitten singer Mary Philbin swoons and yearns to take a look at the musician seducing her with music. So she sneaks behind him, removes his mask, and finds herself facing the Phantom of the Opera.

It's a big crescendo in a big show, and one that requires the substantial skills of a good accompanist to pull off: *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) is a silent film, and the eerie organ music needed to wring the most out of its suspenseful sequences must be provided by a theatre organist pushing notes through a powerful instrument. And that's why Radio City Music Hall might be the venue of choice for any *Phantom* revival: It houses the largest organ that Wurlitzer manufactured.

How big is Radio City's Wurlitzer? In 2008 retired Air Force Colonel Jack Moelmann paid \$118,182.44 just to play the tuneful titan. Moelmann, an accomplished organist and former president of the American Theatre Organ Society, said in a *New York Times* interview, "It's like walking into the cockpit of a 747. Even if I were a pilot, you look at all these controls and say, 'Now what?'"

The 4/58 Mighty Wurlitzer Opus 2179 two-console organ at Radio City Music Hall was the biggest ever built by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company of North Tonawanda, New York. Installed in 1932, it was the brainchild of S. L. Roxy Rothafel, chief of architecture and construction for Radio City Music Hall. Rumor has it that Rothafel initially approached Chicago piano and organ manufacturer W. W. Kimball and Company to build the melodious monster because he had worked with Kimball at the Roxy—his namesake theatre. But in the end, Wurlitzer was awarded the contract because, as one story goes, the board of trustees felt that the best theatre in the country should have an organ built by the top theatre organ company.

Radio City's Wurlitzer has fifty-eight "ranks" or rows of pipes that emit similar sounds at different pitches. These ranks are grouped in separate divisions—Great, Orchestral, and Solo—that give the organ its oomph. Its 4,178 pipes are installed in eight chambers located on either side of the stage. Even though Wurlitzer built it, the Radio City organ retains many of the Kimball specifications ordered by Rothafel. For example, the organ's Orchestral division of twenty-three ranks contains a secondary principal chorus, reeds, and a string chorus.



Radio City Music Hall • 1260 Avenue of the Americas • New York, New York 10020 • (212) 465-6741 • radiocity.com



Radio City Music Hall's Wurlitzer is the only surviving Wurlitzer in the country that is operated by two independent consoles. Often, when an organ has two consoles, the first acts as master, and the second limps musically along. Not so at Radio City. Each organist can play a full range of sounds, including that of a grand piano, piccolo, and glockenspiel—or tuba, tom-tom, and bird tweet. Indeed, the monster at Radio City Music Hall can produce almost any sound but a scream. But that's okay. If audience reaction to *The Phantom of the Opera* is any indication, Lon Chaney already has that blood-curdling corner covered. ♥

LYNN MILLER is a Roadside Contributor to AMERICAN ROAD. Console photo courtesy MSG Entertainment. Radio City Music Hall © Stuart Monk | Dreamstime.com. Organist photo courtesy Christopher Spooner.



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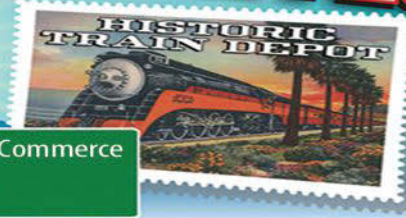
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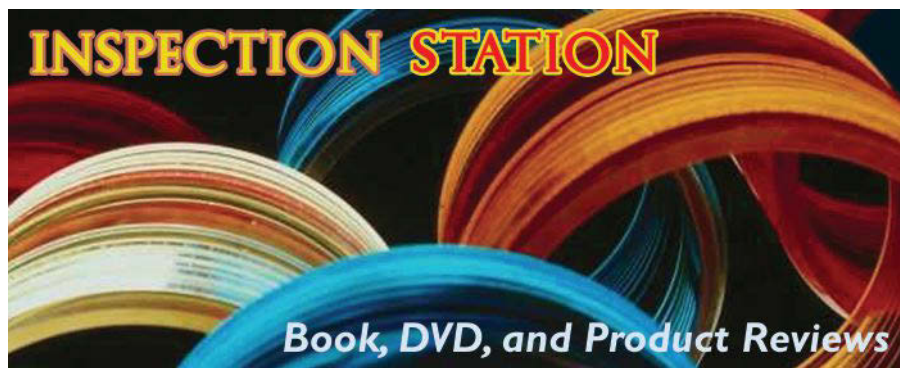
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Contributors: Jillian Gurney, Lynn Miller, and Mark A. Vernarelli

## The Revenge of Daisy

By Elliott Greenspan  
Illustrated by Denis Proulx  
FRIESENPRESS  
Softcover, 8.5 × 11 × 0.1  
32 pages; \$18.99

**B**y vocation, Elliott Greenspan is a medical doctor. But his real life's work is being a father. And as such, he surely heard that repetitive chorus of "Are we there yet?" that can drive adults crazy during road trips.

Greenspan wrote *The Revenge of Daisy* in an effort to keep his children occupied on the road. It's a colorfully illustrated book based on the author's own fond reminiscences of the family guinea pig and golden retriever. The story concerns Daisy the guinea pig and how she takes umbrage upon having to trade her roomy cage for a small travel carrier during her family's extended vacation drive. Needless to say, Daisy takes out her frustration in a way that leaves her caretakers sleepless and scared—until the happy ending.

There are no heavy moral lessons or lectures about behavior or any other kid-centered issue. This is just a fun read for kids while their parents are hitting the highway armed with *American Road* to guide their way. Our copy included a colorful bookmark that tired eyes can use should a nap or break in the reading become necessary.

—MARK A. VERNARELLI

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**A** good night's rest is important on the road, but to people suffering from insomnia, sleeping in an environment other than their own bedroom can be a challenge. For those who require white noise to drown out distractions, creating the perfect sleep zone is that much harder. Packing gadgets takes space—and there's only so much room in an overnight bag.

On a spur-of-the-moment excursion, this reviewer forgot her trusty travel-size fan. She didn't discover the oversight until nightfall, and then panic took hold. A call to the hotel desk clerk acquired nothing but the knowledge that a floor fan was unavailable. What to do?

The day (and the night) was saved by an online visit to the App Store, which revealed the existence of more than thirty apps designed to provide troubled sleepers with soothing white noise. Among them, this reviewer discovered White Noise Ambience Lite—a free app billed as "The Nap App"—that ushers snoozers into slumberland with an undercurrent of calming sound.

Users can choose from forty audible motifs that include washing ocean waves, a crackling campfire, and a simple humming floor fan—even a lawn sprinkler or Tibetan singing bowl.

The hums, whirs, and whistles are consistent and will play indefinitely as long as the battery of your iPhone, iPad, or iPod remains charged. Best of all is a mix feature that permits the tired and weary to create their own programs and arrange for themselves the white noise notes that most sound like a dreamy symphony.

—JILLIAN GURNEY

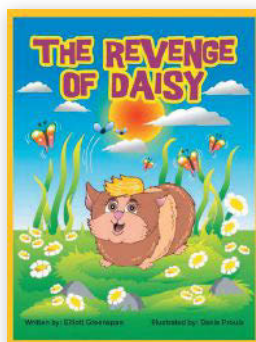
## Dog Days: Tales from an American Road Trip

By Andrew Thompson  
FINGERPRESS  
Softcover, 5 × 8 × 0.7  
332 pages; \$9.99

**O**n the back cover of his book, author Andrew Thompson warns readers that his text contains "some very candid observations of America and its people!" And he's not kidding.

The Australian-born lawyer took a three-year sabbatical to visit thirty countries, one of which was the land of the free—and also the fat, overly patriotic, and stupid, according to Thompson. Traveling with his girlfriend across the USA, he blazed a scathing trail from Monument Valley to New Orleans, and Yellowstone National Park to Yankee Stadium. The "dog" in his book's title was inspired by the Greyhound bus he rode—although it's not likely that Greyhound Lines Inc. will soon have a link to Mr. Thompson's book on its website. His narrative isn't friendly fare.

*Dog Days* is a snarling indictment of the people and places Thompson encountered during his journey. He records testy exchanges with clerks, a near brawl with a motorist, and less-than-enriching experiences with "dumb" Americans. He bemoans the many highways dedicated to veterans, and bristles at the ubiquitous hamburger joints—as if he's the dissatisfied king of all he surveys. His is a savage philosophy—and yet he is wickedly funny.





In fact, *Dog Days* is a difficult book to set down—not only for the titters in its terrible text, but also for the surprisingly touching emotional moments it presents. Call Thompson unflinching—call him unfair—but his assessment is honest, even if some of his candor stings Americans a little.

—MARK A. VERNARELLI

## ***The 66 Kid: Raised on the Mother Road***

By Bob Boze Bell  
VOYAGEUR PRESS  
Softcover, 10.9 × 8.5 × 0.6  
192 pages; \$30.00

All roads may not lead to Peach Springs, Arizona. But Route 66 cuts right through that tiny town on the Hualapai Indian Reservation. And on the shoulders of that famous highway, Bob Boze Bell learned to lived, laugh, and, eventually, draw and write. That's the backstory behind *The 66 Kid: Raised on the Mother Road*—a colorful, fascinating book that's part autobiography, part history, and wholly centered on America's most famous highway.

Bell's father operated a Peach Springs service station—a pursuit that brought his young son into direct contact with tourists driving to and from Los Angeles. The setting fired the boy's imagination. In time, Bell grew to be a tremendous illustrator. His own artwork—combined with vintage and modern photos, maps, and graphics—greatly enhances *The 66 Kid*.

This is a large book with a small scope. Much of its text centers on Bell's own childhood and family. The narrative is episodic, but at its best, the freewheeling layout works in its favor. Bell seeks to present a personal story—a collection of memories that illustrate his life at road's edge—so it's appropriate that *The 66 Kid* feels something like an affectionate scrapbook.

Bell is at his best when he remembers people—intrepid travelers and Hualapai heroes—or recalls the despair that followed the eventual bypass of Route 66. Fortunately, the road has survived, thanks to the efforts of people such as Bob Boze Bell, whose book keeps the past alive in the hearts of devotees.

—MARK A. VERNARELLI

## **Find Me Gluten Free App**

GLUTEN FREE CLASSES, LLC  
Version 1.9.16, 9.4 MB  
Requires iOS 5.0 or later.  
Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.  
Optimized for iPhone 5; Free

Dining out enhances the enjoyment of any journey. But dietary restrictions, such as a gluten or dairy allergy, can make finding an eatery that will accommodate needs challenging. Adventure is one thing, but a trip to an emergency room to quash an allergic reaction should never be part of the vacation equation.

Enter the Find Me Gluten Free App. This simple free program lets travelers search for establishments that offer gluten-free menu choices anywhere in the USA. Simply download in iTunes for iPhone (or Google Play for Android). Punch in a location and the program goes to work presenting prospective choices for your next wheatless repast.

Eating establishments are ranked by users via a five-star system. Each restaurant's location, phone, and website (if applicable) are listed so consumers can contact management with questions or view web pages for options, hours, etc. A Directions tab links the eateries to Google Maps so driving to your table is a snap.

Some listed restaurants may not offer exclusive gluten-free menus—but these establishment are reportedly willing to accommodate wheat-free dietary needs. Many additional

allergen-free menu accommodations are also highlighted, so users can also choose dairy- and nut-free options.

The Find Me Gluten Free app is fun and free. Best of all, it includes classic diners, so you can put a nostalgic flavor back into your road trips. So drive safely and dine well.

—LYNN MILLER

## **Miracle Copper Anti-Fatigue Compression Socks**

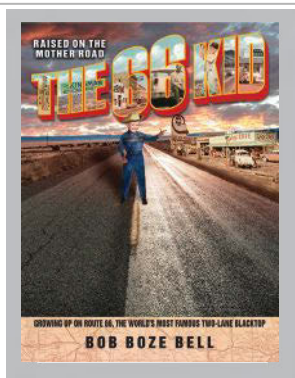
COPPER WEAR™  
88% copper fiber embedded nylon  
Men and women's sizes S/M or L/XL  
\$12.99

Who knew Miracles come in pairs? We're not talking about moving mountains or parting great bodies of water. Miracles, in this case, are Copper Anti-Fatigue Compression Socks. They're manufactured by Copper Wear™—a company that claims their products "improve circulation and reduce swelling, and also help to relieve aches and pains." The secret, they report, is "graduated compression and copper infused fibers."

A busy day touring museums put these Miracle socks to the test. This reviewer's tootsies were still tired by the end of the day. But the usual swelling and tenderness of this reviewer's feet and ankles after the long day of walking seemed minimal. Nerve pain seemed reduced as well—which is amazing.

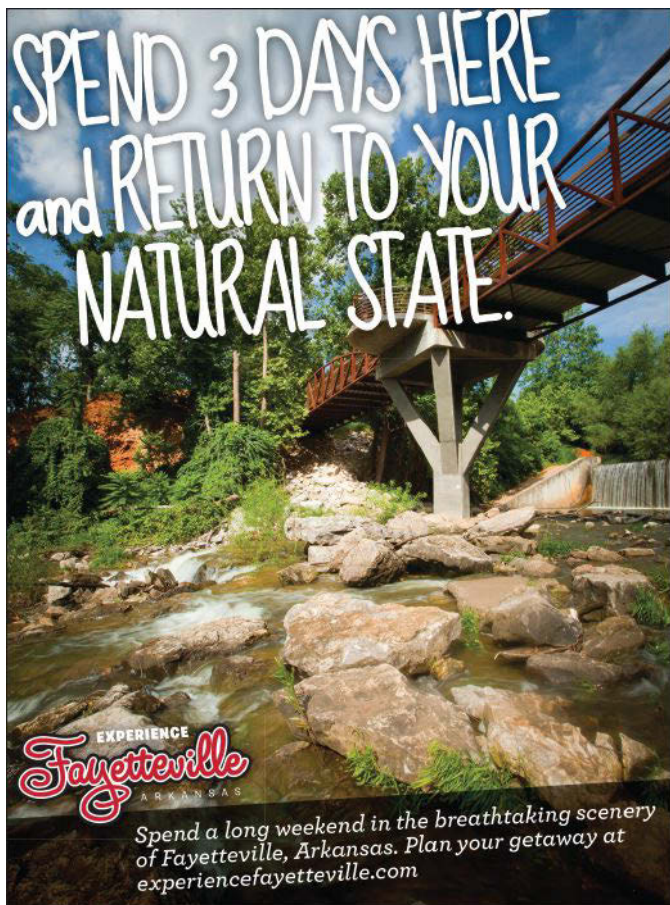
The socks are available in sizes for both men and women. They are also sold in knee-high and ankle styles. Consumers can choose from black or white. The price is right, too. These socks ring up at less than fifteen dollars. The Miracle Copper Socks are made of antimicrobial, breathable, wickable fabric—meaning no smelly feet. Now, that's a miracle!

—LYNN MILLER ♥



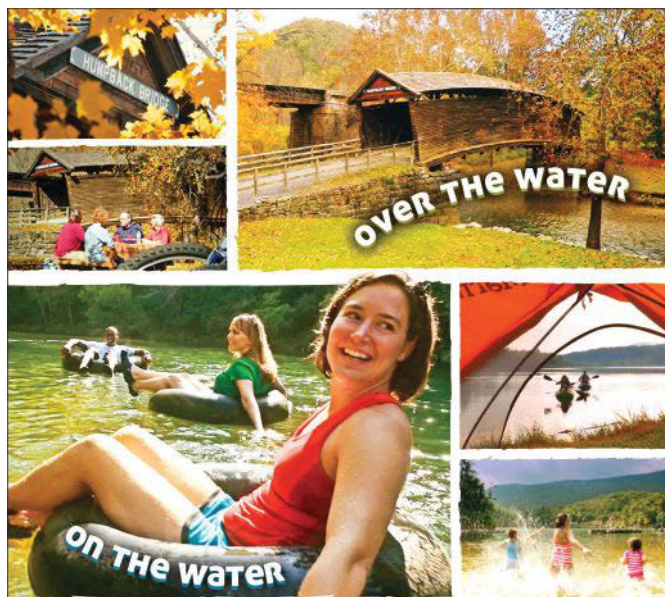


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# THE EXTRA MILE

GOING THE DISTANCE TO VISIT DESTINATIONS OFF THE BEATEN PATH

• BY THOMAS ARTHUR REPP

## "Party Hardy"

**N**ight settles over eastern Georgia as thickly as the fade-out at the end of a 1930s film. Along US Highway 221, the headlights of automobiles prick the darkness like the last vestiges of light on a movie screen. But under the neon marquee of the Columbia Theatre, no one has told the figure inside the ticket booth that the show is over: There, a mannequin stands, wearing a bowler hat from another era, watching passing traffic with a face frozen in time.

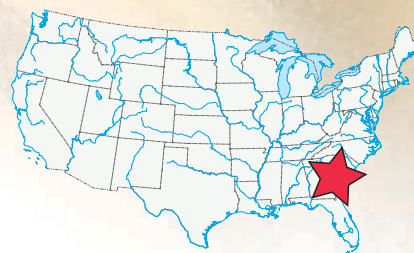
Now and then, a car carrying an out-of-towner pulls over to the curb. A figure with a camera emerges, excited, fixing a lens on the figure fronting the Columbia. A flash of light splits the night. *Cut! And that's a wrap.*

Local police watch the tourists come and go. They're accustomed to the routine, and determined to keep everyone safe when they stop to snap photographs. On

occasion, officers engage the sightseers in conversation—only to hear what they've heard many times before. "Oh, my husband and I are such fans!" one woman gushes. "*Wir nennen sie, Dick und Doof*," offers a visitor from Germany. "*Jeg opsøgte Gøg og Gokke*," counters another from Denmark. The police nod and smile. Then they drive away at a deliberate pace more befitting the Hal Roach Studios than the kops of Keystone, knowing the fans will never stop coming, and donning badges on their uniforms that proudly proclaim their town "Harlem, Georgia—The Birthplace of Oliver Hardy."

### Another Fine Mess

Ask casual film fans what they know about Laurel and Hardy, and they'll likely describe the same scene: The fat man with the toothbrush moustache turns to the thin man with the glazed eyes and grumbles grandiloquently, "Well, here's another fine mess you've gotten me into!" Oliver Hardy glowers. Stan Laurel cries. Cue the discordant clarinets playing "The Cuckoo Song." And fade out to laughter.



**THE LAUREL AND HARDY MUSEUM** is located at 250 North Louisville Street, Harlem, Georgia 30814. Phone (706) 556-0401 or visit [harlemga.org](http://harlemga.org) for more information about the museum and the annual Oliver Hardy Festival.

Millions of people can replay that sequence in their minds—even though it never appeared on film. Contrary to popular belief, Oliver Hardy never chided Stan Laurel for creating "another fine mess." Oh, he griped and groaned, and pompously pointed a finger at his pal whenever life's brickbats bounced off his bean. But when he assigned blame, he invariably did so in a way that revealed no meanness in his manner.

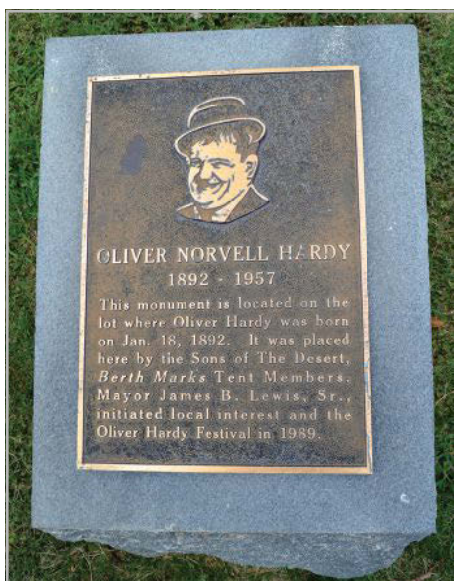
"Well," he'd announce, often sneaking a peek at the camera in search of audience sympathy, "here's another *nice* mess you've gotten me into."

*A nice mess.* Not a fine mess. Not a foul mess. Not a big mess or a bad mess. Just the benign kind of chaos a pair might provoke picking up street litter while wearing Scottish kilts, embarking upon a Sunday outing with their gouty uncle Edward, or attempting to sell mousetraps in cheese shops throughout the Swiss Alps. In Laurel and Hardy's world, the mayhem is largely harmless—mostly because the men at its middle are at heart patient and gentle souls.



**HATS OFF:** Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy appeared together in 106 films over a period of thirty years. Initially billed independently, the pair became a professional team in 1927, around the time they filmed the prison comedy *The Second Hundred Years*. Their final film, *Atoll K*, was filmed in France and not released in the US until December 1954.





They've learned to endure because the world has required that they do so: Life offers few options when fate gives a person a goat instead of an angora sweater—or bequeaths him a flea circus when what he really needs is a good night's sleep.

Harlem, Georgia, embraces that spirit by presenting it in pictures. Once the sun rises, and the Columbia Theatre's marquee goes dark for the day, tourists discover murals gracing the side of the old movie palace—images inspired by Laurel and Hardy's 1934 fairytale feature *Babes in Toyland* and their Academy Award-winning short *The Music Box*. A panorama painted on the exterior of a local flower shop depicts a chase scene that might have been plucked from any number of vintage reels, while inside the neighborhood IGA grocery, a makeshift marquee mounted above the produce section advertises the team's 1937 cowboy outing *Way Out West*. One can't hide from Oliver Hardy in Harlem: His face looms large on the city's water tower—a prodigious portrait best viewed from a vantage point along South Hicks Street, just west of its intersection with US 221. There, a granite block capped with a bronze plaque marks the plot where a house once stood—a modest home in which Hardy was born on January 18, 1892.

"Ollie weighed fourteen pounds at birth," says area resident Linda Caldwell. "His father died when he was ten months old, and his mother moved to Milledgeville, Georgia, where she ran the Baldwin Hotel. When Ollie was young, he got a job at the local movie theatre. He ran the projector and sang between shows—he had a lovely tenor voice. That's how he got his start as an entertainer."

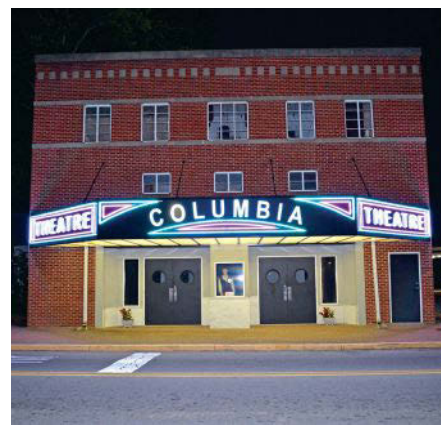


**BERTH MARKS:** [Above, left] A monument commemorating the location of Oliver Hardy's birth was placed in 1993 as part of the annual Oliver Hardy Festival. [Above, right] Murals honoring the comedians appear around Harlem, including a painting of the pair as they appeared in their 1934 storybook film *Babes in Toyland* [below].



### Double Whoopee

Caldwell is one of five volunteers who operate The Laurel and Hardy Museum—the heart of Harlem's tribute to its famous funny son. She's also one of the few people in town who can explain precisely how that eclectic collection was born of another nice mess: "In 1989, Harlem held its first annual Oliver Hardy Festival," she says of the city-wide celebration that assumed a life of its own. These days, the rollicking October event attracts upward of 35,000 participants. Streets close. Stages regale spectators with live entertainment. Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy look-alikes wander here and there—the latter twiddling their neckties in the nervous manner made famous by the man from Harlem who was forever finding himself in a jam.



**HOLLYWOOD PARTY:** [Above] Named for the county it served, the Columbia Theatre opened in 1949 and closed in 1963. The City of Harlem began restoring the facility in 2005. The façade was restored to its original appearance. The old cinema will eventually be refashioned as a multi-purpose performing arts venue.

The Laurel and Hardy Museum opened its doors more than a decade after the festival debuted. Housed inside a former post office, the old mail house is today equipped to deliver history. Interpretive panels explain how Hardy appeared in movies made by the Lubin Studio of Jacksonville, Florida, in 1914; how he honed his talents at Pathé, Edison, and Vitagraph before signing with the Hal Roach Studios of Culver City, California; and how, once there, he was paired on-screen with English stage actor Stan Laurel, who had come to America as an understudy to Charlie Chaplin. That made the duo an international act, and they've been popular overseas ever since.







**CALL OF THE CUCKOO:** [Left] The Laurel and Hardy Museum of Harlem, Georgia, opened in 2002 as the first museum in the US dedicated to the celebrated comedy duo. A similar museum had opened in Stan Laurel's hometown of Ulverston, England, in 1983. [Above] Museum volunteer Linda Caldwell poses in front of the oversized *Swiss Miss* mousetrap.

"We call them 'Stanlio' and 'Ollio,'" says a visitor from Italy. "I remember, when I was a child, my mother took me to see one of their movies. It was *The Bohemian Girl*, and I started laughing and I couldn't stop, and my mother took me out of the theatre because I couldn't stop laughing. I thought, *What does she expect me to do?*"

From the first, Laurel and Hardy's comedy was fueled by frustration. As a rule, their characters inhabit a world in which anything that can go wrong will—no matter how modest their ambitions. The museum traces this study in cinematic aggravation through its collections of film posters, publicity materials, photographs, and artifacts.

**TWICE TWO:** [Below, left] A pair of Ezra Brooks Heritage China decanters portray Laurel and Hardy in costume for their 1935 feature *Bonnie Scotland*, which—small wonder—is largely set in India. [Below, center] An artsy gourd displays a scene from the 1929 talkie short *Men O' War*. [Below, right] Babe's Bijou, the museum's theatre, takes its name for Hardy's sobriquet, "Babe"—which was bestowed upon him by a barber for his abundance of baby fat. [Opposite] The Dancing Masters Calliope is a parade favorite that plays a version of the Hal Roach theme "Good Old Days."

Many of the displayed collectibles depict the boys as they appeared in specific movies. There are bookends inspired by their college comedy *A Chump at Oxford* and a doorstop molded from their after-dark romp *Night Owls*. One of the oddest objects on display is a large orange gourd: The sides of the oblong rind have been decorated with scenes culled from the duo's late silent and early sound shorts, including *Liberty*, *The Finishing Touch*, and *Men O' War*.

A great deal of the display space is given over to toys: Yo-yos, paper dolls, pencil sharpeners—even popsicle molds shaped like the famed thick-and-thin pair—bespeak a popularity that has seldom been equaled. One prominent exhibit case contains a number of handmade Laurel and Hardy marionettes fashioned by local craftsman Gary O. Russeth. "I used to make props for civic and children's theatre," Russeth explains, "but I started making marionettes for my daughter." Russeth's Laurel-and-Hardy-related puppets include the titular pooch from the 1931 short comedy *Laughing Gravy* and perennial foil James Finlayson dressed as the magician

from the 1942 Fox feature *A-Haunting We Will Go*.

At the back of the museum, guests are invited to view Laurel and Hardy films inside a modest theatre informally known as Babe's Bijou. As Russeth explains, the shows are popular with tourists and locals alike. "We have a group of Mennonites who visit from Wrens, Georgia," he says. "They can't watch television, they can't dance, but they can watch Laurel and Hardy. They come up here in a group and view three or four Laurel and Hardy films at a time."

The Bijou also contains its share of memorabilia—movie posters from *Way Out West* and *The Bohemian Girl*—and the odd contraption Russeth calls his favorite curiosity in the museum: a six-foot Victor mousetrap that pays homage to the 1938 musical *Swiss Miss*—an alpine operetta in which Stan and Ollie play American mousetrap salesmen in Switzerland. Russeth built the contraption out of a door he salvaged from the old Columbia Theatre. The door handle forms a section of the spring mechanism—an appropriate part for an old film portal to play.







**BLOCK-HEADS:** [Above] The charming sculpture called *Mt. Laurelhardy* fronts a pond outside The Ollie Also & Stanie Too Fine Mess Old Car Museum. The humble hill was fashioned by theatrical craftsman Gary O. Russeth, whose automobile replicas [right] are parked inside the museum with a number of Laurel and Hardy figures.



### Leave 'Em Laughing

One of the museum's most popular features is a tableau inspired by the 1929 short *Perfect Day*. The film concerns a picnic outing undertaken by an automobile that never succeeds in puttering more than half a block from home, thanks to mechanical mishaps, neighborhood spats, and a grumpy, gout-afflicted uncle griping in the backseat. In homage to that terribly funny trip, Gary Russeth has constructed a life-size replica of the put-upon car—complete with Stan and Ollie figures sitting up front—that permits visitors to pose for pictures that make it appear they are riding along with the hapless pair. It's a perfect end to a perfect visit.

Russeth's skill with sawdust and fiberglass has inspired him to establish a second area museum dedicated to the derby-donning duo: The Ollie Also & Stanie Too Fine Mess Old Car Museum rests inside an outbuilding in Russeth's backyard, not too far from the miniature Rushmore-inspired sculpture known as *Mt. Laurelhardy*. Open by appointment, the museum can be described as a combination workshop and showroom.

**THE FIXER UPPERS:** [Right] Gary O. Russeth and his dedicated helpmate, Jean, pose inside The Ollie Also & Stanie Too Fine Mess Old Car Museum. Russeth has been fascinated with cars since the age of nineteen, when he started restoring a 1921 Model T Roadster. These days, his models are largely built of wood and fiberglass.

Here Russeth pieces together life-size model vehicles—including a 1902 curved-dash Oldsmobile and a 1907 Buick G Sportscar—and displays them alongside other creations drawn from his imagination. Ask to see the progress he's making on *The General*—a half-scale replica of the notable 4-4-0 steam locomotive that appeared in the famous Buster Keaton film of the same name—and keep an eye out for the Dancing Masters Calliope, which tunelessly pays homage to Laurel and Hardy's last major motion picture contract at the flip of a switch. The charming music box inevitably plays part in the opening parade every autumn when the annual Oliver Hardy Festival rocks the city, and fervent fans from all over the world arrive once again to transform Harlem into...well...another nice mess.



The jolly jumble will arrive this year on Saturday, October 3. Expect to see the neon on the Columbia Theatre glowing to beat the band and flashes from cameras making a Hollywood of Harlem deep into the night. And those cops with the badges? They'll likely be there, too, as giggles and good will descend upon all. Film critic Leonard Maltin once wrote, "Love is the key word in Laurel and Hardy's films: love of comedy and a love of humanity, with all its flaws and peccadilloes." The world can be a messy place, but it's been made a bit brighter by two men in bowler hats who did their best to face every catastrophe and call it nice. In so doing, they left the scene a little light and a lot of laughter—in a form that is fine, divine, and ultimately sublime. ♥



THOMAS ARTHUR REPP is the Executive Editor of AMERICAN ROAD. All modern photos by the author.



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Highway 24, through the Solomon Valley, Kansas delivers travelers to Nicodmus, a town established by freed slaves. Now a National Historic Site with visitor center to welcome and enlighten you. Graham County, KS.



Painted by David DeArmond

[www.hwy24.org](http://www.hwy24.org) 785-568-0120



# AMERICAN CROSSROAD

## SOLUTION TO THIS ISSUE'S PUZZLE

C	A	R	S		P	A	R	I	S		R	O	M	P		H	A	L	O		
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For additional archived travel-themed puzzles and their solutions, visit [americanroadmagazine.com/crossroad](http://americanroadmagazine.com/crossroad).



**June 17–27, North Platte, Neb.—NEBRASKA Land Days.** See the Buffalo Bill Rodeo—the largest outdoor rodeo in Nebraska, founded by Colonel William F. Cody in 1882. Watch as the antique car parade rumbles through the city. [nebraskalanddays.com](http://nebraskalanddays.com)

**June 18–July 4, Cedar Rapids, Iowa—Freedom Festival.** Celebrate the nation's birthday with more than seventy events including hot air balloons and a parade. Don't miss the grand finale, the largest fireworks show in the state. [freedomfestival.com](http://freedomfestival.com)

**June 19–21, St. Paul, Minn.—Back to the 50's.** Go back in time for an outdoor hot rod gathering. Listen to the music at the bandshell. See the Model Car Contest. Get up early Sunday morning and shop at the car Swap Meet. [msrabacktothe50s.com](http://msrabacktothe50s.com)

**June 20–28, Kirkwood, Mo.—Great Race.** Classic autos converge upon historic Kirkwood before they travel westward through seven states to Santa Monica, Calif. Check out more than 120 classic cars ranging from 1915 to 1972. [greatrace.com](http://greatrace.com)

**June 22–26, Ann Arbor, Mich.—Lincoln Highway Conference.** Attend the twenty-third annual conference. Catch the Feeder Route Tour. See the Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, and Ford Rouge Plant. [indianalincolnhighway.org](http://indianalincolnhighway.org)

**June 25–28, Sturgis, S.Dak.—Camaro Rally.** Generations of Camaros cruise through the scenic Black Hills of South Dakota. Celebrate a great American muscle car with a show and shine, auto cross, poker runs, and drag racing. [sturgiscamarorally.com](http://sturgiscamarorally.com)

**June 26–27, North East, Md.—Chevelle Show.** See the largest gathering of 1964 to 1972 Chevelles, Malibus, Lagunas, Beaumonts, and El Caminos on the East Coast. Shop at a swap meet and enjoy music and fare on Chesapeake Bay. [mdchevelleclub.com](http://mdchevelleclub.com)

**June 26–27, Two Rivers, Wis.—Cool City Classic Car Cruise and Show.** Attend an evening car cruise running from the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc to Central Park in Two Rivers. See classic cars. Enjoy great music and food. [tworiversmainstreet.com](http://tworiversmainstreet.com)

**June 26–28, Miami, Okla.—Peoria Powwow.** Attend a grand festival of Native American culture and dance. Witness a wide range of contest dancing. Enjoy tasty treats and browse booths filled with American Indian arts and crafts. [travelok.com](http://travelok.com)

**June 27, Santa Cruz, Calif.—Woodies on the Wharf.** See Northern California's largest woodie show with over two hundred pre-1952 wood-bodied cars. Stroll the Santa Cruz Wharf and enjoy the scenic coastal views. Stop and shop or dine. [santacruzwoodies.com](http://santacruzwoodies.com)

**July 2–5, Ashland, Ohio—Balloon Festival.** This Lincoln Highway town is decorated with a rainbow of color as balloons drift across the sky. Entertainment, music, and a variety of food are all part of the non-stop activities. [ashlandohioballoonfest.com](http://ashlandohioballoonfest.com)

**July 4, Mount Vernon, Va.—Fourth of July at George Washington's Home.** See a dazzling display of day-time smoke fireworks fired over the Potomac River. Witness military reenactments and enjoy free birthday cake. [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org)

**July 9–13, Baker City, Ore.—Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally.** Ride the byways and backroads of eastern Oregon. Travel Hells Canyon or the Devil's Tail to Hells Canyon Dam. Try the Little Dragon if you dare—188 corners in fourteen miles. [hellscanyonrally.com](http://hellscanyonrally.com)

**July 9–13, Blackfoot, Idaho—Blackfoot Pride Days.** Enjoy the classic cars and motorcycles or fly up in the sky on an airplane ride. Tour the Idaho Potato and the Bingham Historical Museums. Don't miss the free potato feed! [cityofblackfoot.org/pride\\_days](http://cityofblackfoot.org/pride_days)

**July 10–12, Corinth, Miss.—Slugburger Festival.** Taste a local culinary delight—a deep-fried beef and soy meal patty that once sold for a nickel—also known as a slug. See the Major League of Eating's Slugburger contest! [mainstreetcorinth.com](http://mainstreetcorinth.com)

**July 11–12, Owls Head, Maine—Rod, Custom and Muscle Car Cruise-In.** See an assortment of street-rod, classic, and vintage cars. Experience the thrill of an antique aeroplane show, Model T rides, and ground vehicle demonstrations. [owlshead.org](http://owlshead.org)

**July 15–18, Erie, Pa.—Roar on the Shore.** Motorcycles and fans descend on the shores of Lake Erie to enjoy rides, bands, and contests. Riders can check out Presque Isle State Park, wine country, and Chautauqua Lake, New York. [roarontheshore.com](http://roarontheshore.com)

**July 16–18, Bowling Green, Ky.—National Corvette Homecoming.** See or show a vintage collectible Corvette. Watch the Hot Rods play baseball. Tour the GM Assembly Plant. Stay for A Taste of Kentucky dinner. [corvettehometcoming.com](http://corvettehometcoming.com)

**July 17–18, Slaton, Tex.—Nostalgia Car Show & Cruise.** Start the weekend right with both a Friday night cookout and an evening cruise. See classic cars at the show and shine. Enter to win cool door prizes. [caprockclassiccarrclub.org](http://caprockclassiccarrclub.org)

**July 18, Lafayette, Ind.—Dancing & Cruising in the Streets.** Dance the night away to music from three stages with live entertainment. Enjoy the classic car and motorcycle cruise through downtown. Feast upon the local cuisine. [dancinginthestreets.net](http://dancinginthestreets.net)

**July 24–25, Lake Charles, La.—Marshland Festival.** Get a taste of southwest Louisiana, known for flavorful fare and traditional music. Listen to Cajun, Zydeco, Swamp pop, and country music. Savor local Cajun cuisine. [marshlandfestival.com](http://marshlandfestival.com)

**July 24–25, Salina, Utah—Blast from the Past Car Show.** Bring the family to see hundreds of classic cars in top condition. Attend the Friday Night Cruise and Social. Enjoy the food, games, music, entertainment, and crafts. [blastfromthepastcarshow.com](http://blastfromthepastcarshow.com)

**July 24–26, Glenrio, N. Mex.—Route 66 Freedom Ride Flight and Cruise.** Kick off the weekend with a four-hundred-mile car cruise to support the troops. At sunrise, watch a mass ascension of hot air balloons float over Gallup. [rt66freedomweekend.com](http://rt66freedomweekend.com)

**July 24–Aug. 2, Dodge City, Kans.—Dodge City Days.** Grab a cowboy hat! This event celebrates one of the country's last remaining Wild West towns. Don't miss the rodeo, classic cars, barbecue contest, and western parade. [dodgecitydays.com](http://dodgecitydays.com)

**July 26, Montgomery, N.Y.—Orange County Antique Auto Club Annual Show.** This show includes hundreds of classic cars, trucks, imports/tuners, tractors, street rods, and low riders. See the Newburgh Model Car Club display. [ocantiqueautoclub.com](http://ocantiqueautoclub.com)

**July 30–Aug. 1, Hiawassee, Ga.—Moonshine Cruizin Car Show.** Hundreds of classic cars and hot rods on display will take a sixty-mile cruise on the mountain roads. Join the fun! See the Pioneer Village and real moonshine still. [gammoonshinecruizin.com](http://gammoonshinecruizin.com)

**Aug. 2, East Hampton, Conn.—Vintage Motor Car Meet.** Admire rare and beautifully restored automobiles—from the early days of motoring to 1971. Bring some pocket change to shop at the flea market or visit the car corral. [belltownantiquecarclub.org](http://belltownantiquecarclub.org)

**Aug. 6–8, West Yellowstone, Mont.—Rod Run.** It's a Kodak moment! Witness hundreds of street rods roll through the West Gate of Yellowstone National Park. Take a closer look at these classics—at the show and shine in City Park. [yellowstonerodrun.com](http://yellowstonerodrun.com)

**Aug. 6–9, Jamestown, Tenn.—127 Corridor Sale.** Clean out the closets and stake out the front yards along the Highway 127 corridor. Look, buy, and sell along more than 690 miles from Addison, Michigan, to Gadsden, Alabama. [127sale.com](http://127sale.com)

**Aug. 8–9, Fairplay, Colo.—Living History Days.** Experience boomtown life at South Park City Museum. A re-created mining town will be brought to life with gunfighters, re-enactors, and visitors dressed in period costume. [southparkheritage.org](http://southparkheritage.org)

**Aug. 13–15, Ohio—Lincoln Highway BUY-WAY Yard Sale.** Call it a big sale, yard sale, garage sale, or thrift sale—it's not just about bargains. Enjoy attractions across five states with festivals, concerts, car shows, and rallies. [historicbyway.com](http://historicbyway.com)

**Aug. 14–15, Fargo, N.Dak.—Fargo Blues Festival.** Catch the blues explosion! This event features twelve bands in a first-class baseball stadium. You can sleep under the stars, as camping is within walking distance of the stadium. [fargobluesfest.com](http://fargobluesfest.com)

**Aug. 14–16, Spokane, Wash.—Goodguys Great Northwest Nationals.** See over 1,500 rods, customs, classics, muscle cars, and trucks originally built pre-1973. Don't forget your pocket change for the swap meet and arts & crafts gallery. [good-guys.com](http://good-guys.com)

**Aug. 15, Powell, Wyo.—Wings N' Wheels Car Show and Fly-In.** Watch for the planes to hit the sky at the Powell Municipal Airport. Browse the collection of classic cars. Visit the vendors that make the show possible. [pcwingsnwheels.com](http://pcwingsnwheels.com)

**Aug. 16, Brookline, Mass.—American Car & Truck Day at Larz Anderson Auto Museum.** Spend the day at a patriotic-themed car show dedicated to the American automobile. Stop by the museum—open until 4 p.m. [larzanderson.org](http://larzanderson.org)

**Aug. 22, Guntersville, Ala.—River Run Car Show.** See acres of cool classic cars, trucks, and motorcycles. Enjoy the fabulous live music, entertainment, and local food. Enter to win door prizes, one of which is a crate motor. [riverruncarshow.net](http://riverruncarshow.net)

**Sept. 2–6, Parsippany, N.J.—Lead East.** Revisit the greased hair and tail fins of the 1950s with oldies music and an old car weekend event. Watch movies at the drive-in, dance the jitterbug, or get dressed up for the prom. [leadeast.net](http://leadeast.net)

**Sept. 4–6, Orlando, Fla.—Dream Cars Weekend.** This is a car enthusiast's dream vacation and show, all in one! Spend an evening at "Mardi Gras." Attend the Sock Hop. See the Car Show and Dreambuilders Marketplace. [dreamcarsweekend.com](http://dreamcarsweekend.com)

**Sept. 4–6, Santee, S.C.—Lone Star Bluegrass & Country Music Jamboree.** What a wonderful way to wind down the summer months with four days of great live music! Fill up on barbecue while listening to bluegrass and country tunes. [lonestarbq.net](http://lonestarbq.net)

**Sept. 11–12, Eureka Springs, Ark.—Antique Automobile Festival.** Vintage classics compete for prizes at the parade of vehicles on Saturday morning. After the parade, watch the reenactment of a thwarted 1922 bank robbery. [eurekaspringschamber.com](http://eurekaspringschamber.com)

**Sept. 11–13, Greensboro, N.C.—The National Folk Festival.** Celebrate the roots, richness, and variety of American culture! Watch over thirty groups performing on seven stages. Savor the storytelling, parades, and cuisines. [nationalfolkfestival.com](http://nationalfolkfestival.com)

**Sept. 11–13, St. Robert, Mo.—Route 66 Association of Missouri Hub and Spoke Tour.** Appreciate the beauty of the Ozarks! With St. Robert as the hub, one spoke is a drive to Stafford and the other is to Leasburg. [missouri66.wordpress.com](http://missouri66.wordpress.com)

Please verify dates before attending events • For more great shows and festivals—and to post your event—visit our online calendar at [americanroadmagazine.com/calendar.html](http://americanroadmagazine.com/calendar.html).





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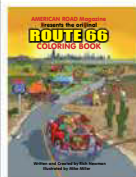
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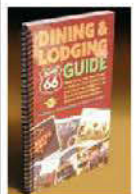


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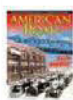


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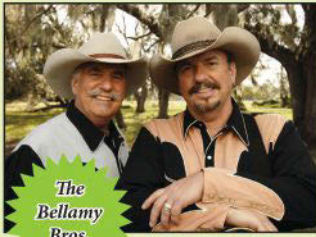
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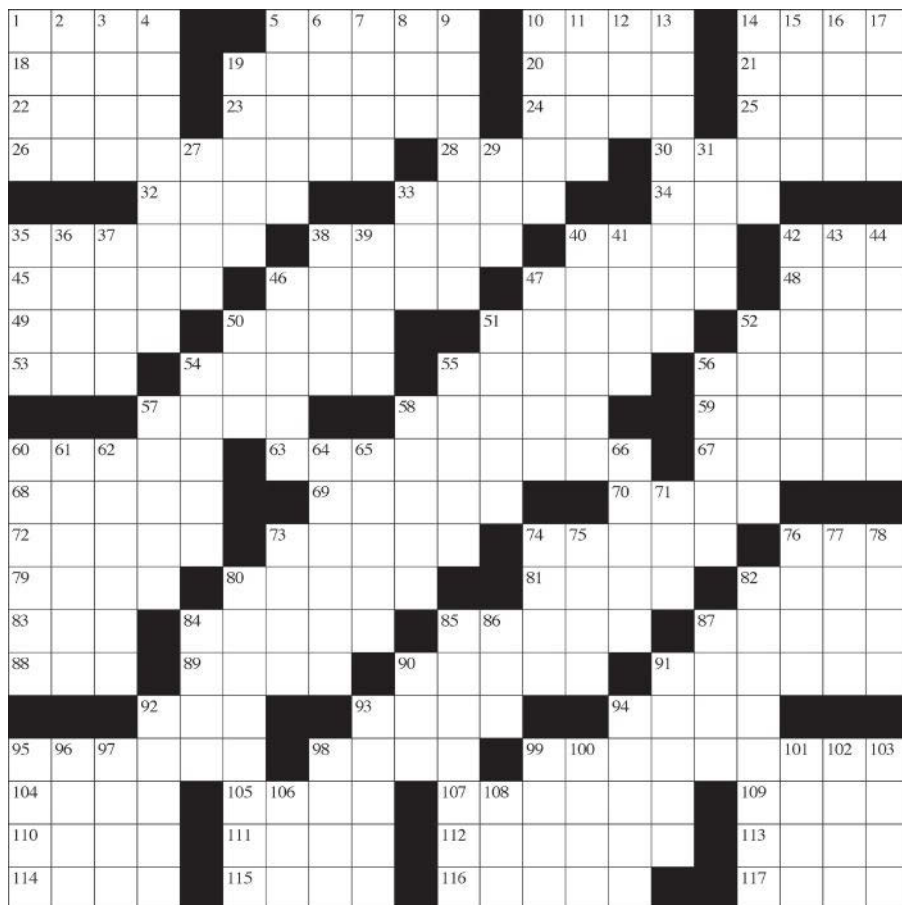
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## ACROSS

1. Chase vehicles
5. Capital of France
10. Frolic
14. Angelic accessory
18. Splice film
19. Withdraw formally
20. Pitcher
21. Smallest component
22. Advise
23. Promised land
24. Bristle
25. Teased
26. Keystone ten-minute
28. Crazy
30. Keystone Ben
32. Camera's eye
33. Clothespins
34. Pan-broil
35. Dexterous
38. Metalworker
40. Type of party
42. Fuss
45. Levels
46. Meager
47. Duplicity
48. Filming site
49. Circular band
50. Mark left by a healed wound
51. Insurgent
52. The Orient
53. Room within a harem
54. Laurel's partner
55. Not hollow
56. Cavity
57. Camera dissolve
58. Look for
59. Awry
60. Keystone Billy

## DOWN

63. Keystone Teddy
67. Ornamental coronet
68. Shun
69. Seasons
70. Republic in southwest Asia
72. Metal spikes
73. Bathroom fixture
74. Ms. Normand
76. Rocky pinnacle
79. Increases
80. Loudly
81. Old
82. Magician
83. Born
84. Type of band
85. Rasping instruments
87. Hood-shaped anatomical part
88. Find the sum of
89. French clergyman
90. Storylines
91. What Chaplin did with the rolls
92. Influenza
93. MGM's Leo
94. Hanna-Barbera bear
95. Member of the clergy
98. Taunt
99. Keystone comedy style
104. Distinctive quality
105. Kentucky fort
107. Breathe in
109. Musical instrument
110. Mr. Summerville
111. First name in jeans
112. Of delicate beauty
113. English monk
114. Otherwise
115. Female sheep
116. Suspension of breathing
117. Jump in figure skating

54. Clock pointers
55. Fragrant
56. *The \_\_\_ Glass of Beer*
57. Does not succeed
58. Summed
60. Keystone peel
61. Escaped
62. Cancelled
64. Idle
65. Nest
66. Heckles
71. Color
73. Reveal indiscreetly
74. Germinated grain used in brewing
75. Matures
76. Baby powder
77. Double curve
78. Access the script
80. Keystone Fatty
82. "The Keystone Province"
84. Indonesian resort island
85. State in which Keystone limestone is mined
86. Electrically charged atom
87. Jokes
90. Keystone cream missile
91. Inane
92. One of sixteen to twenty-four per second
93. Lexicon
94. Seaport in the Crimea
95. Portfolio
96. Soothe
97. Greek goddess of strife
98. Jupiter
99. A place to kick the villi an
100. Narrow street
101. Mountain goat
102. Message symbols
103. Bottom of ship's hull
106. Of recent origin
108. Doze





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**Restaurant  
Week**

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**Taste on  
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August 13

[onbroadway.org/taste](http://onbroadway.org/taste)

**Training  
Camp**

Month of August

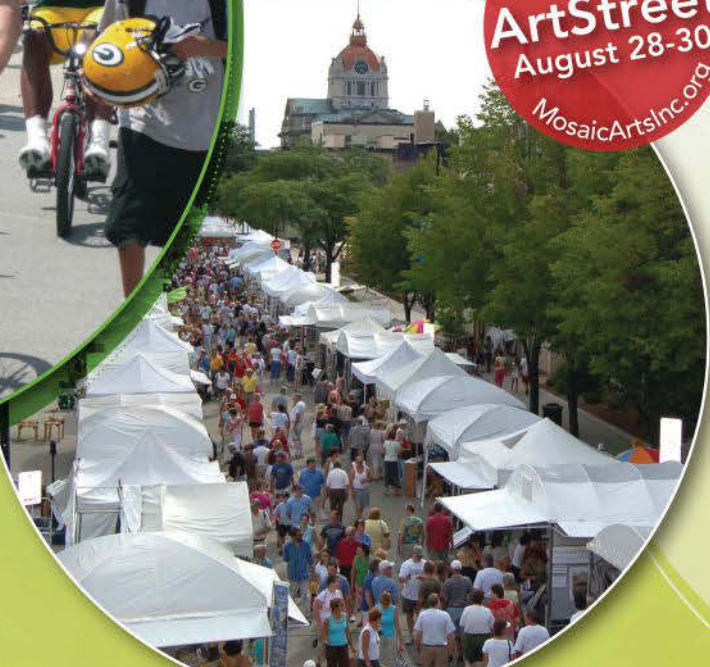
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